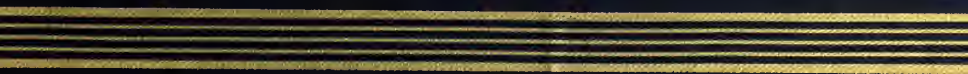




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THE AUSTRALIANS

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A SOCIAL SKETCH

BY

FRANCIS ADAMS

London

T. FISHER UNWIN

PATERNOSTER SQUARE

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MY AUSTRALIAN FRIENDS :

SO MANY—SO DEAR.

Christmas, 1892.

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[The large bulk of this book is made up from the series of articles of mine on Australian social life which appeared recently in the FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW. I have to thank the proprietors of the Review for their permission to reprint this series. I have made any alterations, omissions, or additions which seemed in any way advantageous.—F. A.]

CAIRO, EGYPT,
Christmas, 1892.

PREFACE.

THE only names of Australians which are at all familiar to the general run of Englishmen are those of cricketers, rowers, and prize-fighters.

If the individualities of merely the Australian public men who, like many of these others, have visited England, were but half as familiar as those of (say) Spofforth, Beach, or Slavin, Imperial Federationists would not be agitating so helplessly in the dark for such hopeless impracticabilities as they are, and there would be a much more appreciable chance than there is of England and Australia getting to understand one another before they are separated *à perpétuité*.

Let me not seem to depreciate the athletes.

Quite unconsciously, of course, these men of

brawn have done more to impress on the race, in its different world-scattered habitats, the fact of its solidarity than all the purposeless rhodomontade that has been, and is being, written and spoken by the amateur and professional agitators on this already tiresome topic.

A few Englishmen talking nonsense about England to Australians, a few Anglo-Australians talking nonsense about Australia to Englishmen, have now become something very like an organised, self-advertising chorus of social cliques, while timid and narrow-minded political leaders in both countries, aware that all this clamour amounts to nothing, are waiting to see if anything verifiably genuine can yet proceed from it before they declare themselves.

Alas, it is not in this way that communities far removed and strange to one another, by reason of in many ways very dissimilar natural and social conditions, escape radical misapprehensions, overcome innate prejudices, learn to understand and trust each other's efforts and aspirations.

Were I writing here my impressions as to the wicket-keeping of Blackham, or the bowling of Ferris, the rowing of Searle or of Beach,

the boxing and fighting capacity of Jackson or of Slavin, I should know that I was writing for a public certainly interested, and not by any means unintelligent, and my criticism would feel at once a continual stimulus and a continual check.

And this not merely because a certain section of the public, which we might call the sporting public, has at some time or other actually watched the performances of Slavin and Jackson, of Beach and Searle, of Ferris and Blackham, but because the whole of it has read a great deal and talked a great deal more, about these individuals and their fellows here and in Australia ; so that, even were I to go on and discuss the style and capabilities of Australian cricketers, rowers, or prize-fighters, who have never been in England, I should still be sure of at least keen attention, and a certain amount of discrimination. But, when I set about trying to say a few words concerning what seem to me to be the real characteristics of the Australians, and the real men of mark in Australian public life, I know it is different.

In the first place, not a single name I can mention will be familiar.

The one name that can lay even the faintest claims to such a qualified notoriety is that of Sir Henry Parkes, a man whose day is obviously past; and a little while ago, in a weekly paper of standing which piques itself on its well-informed gravity, he was spoken of as Sir Joseph Parkes, while in a lighter illustrated periodical we meet him as Sir Henry Parker!

Few Englishmen care to know about these things; fewer still know.

The comment on Australian public affairs, given by our newspapers, always excepting in the matter of sport, is inept.

If anything like it were proffered concerning France or Germany, Russia or Italy, the United or even the Balkan States, it would provoke ridicule.

All that is heard is the loud-resounding verbiage of the Imperial Federationist agitators, amateur and professional, grinding the axes of their petty personal fads and social ambitions, worse than the poets who maddened Juvenal by their recitations in the Roman mid-August.

If hot fits and cold fits of pessimism and optimism, the result of severe indigestions

consequent on swallowing huge quantities of unreliable information, are to form the permanent conditions of the English attitude towards Australia, then the odds are exceedingly heavy that savage misunderstandings will arise between the two communities.

Englishmen seem to tolerate nothing further from Australia than the tale which flatters their own foolish national vanity, and still more foolish national prejudices, and this tale the well-to-do Anglo-Australians of England and Australia are ready enough, for sufficiently obvious reasons, to tell them, and to abuse with all the heartiness in the world those who tell any other tale.

To these people the necessity of keeping up the illusions which produce the hot fits, the accesses of enthusiasm for Australian "loyalty" and Australian "prosperity," seem imperative.

Just as the Anglo-Australian of Melbourne rushes away with the English "new chum" whom he has generously engaged to "show round," and proudly points out to him the second-rate imitations of the second-rate results of English contemporary civilisation as being the final fruits of Antipodean effort: so the

Anglo-Australian of London insists everywhere that *Oceana* is a historical record, or that the climate of Melbourne is delectable, or that colonial loans are "as safe as the Bank," or that Sir Henry Parkes is "the Gladstone of the Antipodes."

It is part of what the poor fellow takes to be the Australian national stock-in-trade, without which attention cannot be won, let alone riveted.

And meantime, what are in reality the actual characteristics of the place and people—what has to be reckoned with in all serious relations with them—what, in a word, is the true motive-power of the budding national life—this, which it is of the greatest importance for at least the public men of England to know and appreciate, is hidden away under indistinguishable piles of false comparisons and falser representations.

I lay no claim in this little book to any other quality than that of candour, but to that one quality my claim, I trust, is absolute.

I have tried, to the best of my ability, to tell the simple truth, omitting nothing and setting down nothing, in malice, of a people I love and believe in with all my heart.

Were the Australians not well able to bear the severest criticism, then it would be different.

There is some excuse for withholding blame when blame reveals intolerable weakness.

But Australia is strong—strong in the force of youth, strong in the force of self-confidence and a large expectation, and those who love Australia and believe in the Australian future have no nearer and more urgent duty than to lay bare without a doubt or a fear every phase, every tendency in her national life which may impair that future or chill that love.

The only possible union between Australia and England, which shall contain the elements of solidity and growth, is one based on the principle of "Alliance not Dependence."

The shadow of such a union has already been created by the groping instinctive developments of the race at different ends of the earth, and under conditions largely dissimilar.

It will surely require something more clear and conscious to produce the substance.

At the present moment the two communities stand, like the two knights in the story, looking at the opposite sides of the same shield.

To England it seems of gold : Australia sees it as a more dubious silver.

If I have been able,—let it be but for a moment and for one hasty glance,—to draw the English knight from his own strict point of view into the sphere of that of the Australian—then (as the good people say in the old-fashioned prefaces), I shall not have written in vain.

CAIRO, EGYPT,
Christmas, 1892.

F. A.

INTRODUCTION.



AUSTRALIA,—the actual Australia,—the Australia of the Australians,—is a largely differing place from the average English conception of it.

Imagine a bulging convex sea-coast, running for some two thousand five hundred miles from north to south—from Lat. 10° to Lat. 42° S.—from the tropics to the regions of frost and snow.

The extreme northern portion of it is a Cape Horn—York Peninsula by name—a low-lying tableland of mud, covered with undergrowth vegetation.

The southern portion was also, comparatively recently, a Cape Horn, but the base has been broken through by the sea, and the apex is now an island—Tasmania, once Van Diemen's Land.

From York Peninsula right down the whole length of the sea-coast runs a range of hills.

Its average height is a thousand feet or so above the sea—its average distance from the sea is fifty or sixty miles.

When it reaches the southern corner of the continent it sweeps away four hundred miles or so to the west,—another branch of it reappearing still further south in Tasmania.

Geologists tell us that the oldest parts of Australia are the two long thin strips of elevated land of which this—the Pacific Slope—formed one and a similar but smaller slope, the Indian Slope (which remains in the shape of the coastal range of Western Australia), formed the other.

There has been a slow upheaval of the intervening area, and what were once two long thin islands, like two united New Zealands, separate two thousand miles and more from one another, have now become a continent.

Well, Australia, the actual Australia, the Australia of the Australians, is made up of two parts.

First, there is this marine strip, a ribbon of organised settlement and civilisation, towns

and townships, running all down the eastern coast, continuing for five or six hundred miles along the southern coast and reappearing, so to speak, to the east, past the outskirts of the desert in the country round Adelaide, and to the south in Tasmania.

This is the Pacific Slope.

Next, there is the upland all the way along to the west of the Great Dividing Range—three or four hundred miles deep—an interminable stretch of pastoral land, also passably organised in settlement and civilisation.

This is the Eastern Interior.

Beyond this lie vast realms of “scrub”—more or less occupied for another four or five hundred miles westward, till the outskirts of the great central desert are reached, and we pass into no man’s land, or “the never-never.”

As for Western Australia, it is for all practical purposes as far off as New Zealand, and exists quite as much apart.

Ten years may see this changed, but at present the national life of Australia, the articulate expression of the community as a community is to be found, and to be found only,

in what I have called the Pacific Slope and the Eastern Interior.

Nor is this all.

The climatic conditions of these two habitats are very different.

In France we recognise under the common name of Frenchman two types which would seem to have but little in common—the dry, neurotic man of the Nord and the voluble, adipose man of the Midi.

In Spain, where a sub-tropical sea-slope leads up to a high interior plateau, and thus makes the parallel with Australia curiously complete, the soft and sensuous Andalusian is supplemented by the stern and melancholy Castilian in our national conception of the Spaniard.

Australia has really only known two generations of her children, but already the intense character of the inland climate has begun to differentiate them.

The Pacific Slope enjoys the marine rainfall, and though it suffers from occasional droughts it can rely, in five years out of six, on a distinct summer wet season.

Fifty or sixty miles back from the Great Dividing Range this torrential downpour turns

to showers, and presently passes away in tantalising clouds.

The Eastern Interior has a rainfall, such as it is, of its own.

Here is the true drought-land—the land where the dry and intense heat warps the house-planks by inches, and even arrests the growth of tree and flower and weed.

In another hundred years the man of the Interior—the veritable “bushman”—will be as far removed from the man of the sea-slope as the Northern Frenchman from the Southern, as the Castilian from the Andalusian.

And that is why, although, in the present state of transition, it is not possible to keep these two nascent types consistently distinct, but the chief stress is, and must be, laid on the characteristics which they have in common, still it seems preferable to mark that distinction by two equal divisions of our subject—one given more especially to the people of the Pacific Slope, and the other to the people of the Eastern Interior.

PART I.

THE PACIFIC SLOPE.

THE AUSTRALIANS.



I.

ALONG THE COAST.

WITH brown low cliffs and flats, the land stretches out to east and west as far as the eye can see.

On great patches of it a dense smoke lies heavily, here rising into huge horns blown backward by the incoming sea-breeze, there scattered and whirled into wreaths and lost in a grey and permeating mist.

No sign of verdure, as we mean by verdure in England; only everywhere low, closely-packed, sombre and bristly underwoods, the everlasting gum-tree scrub.

No rivers, creeks, or inlets.

The barren coast runs along unbroken for

five hundred miles at a cast, from river-mouth to river-mouth, from harbour to harbour.

Such is a summer scene on the South Victorian coast, and in winter it is much the same, save that the air is crystal clear and pure in its freedom from the smoke of the bush fires.

It is a climate of sudden and cruel extremes.

The north wind in the summer blows down from the bare interior with the breath of a furnace, shrivelling up all vegetation, driving people within their closed and darkened houses.

The south wind comes direct from the Antarctic without a break and brings a "change" whose coolness is often icily chill.

Christmas is spent either in the nearest approach to a cellar, or close around the blazing fires. And sometimes both within a few days.

Autumn alone brings equable and mellow warmth, basking through March, April, and May, till June is braced with the first touches of frost, and July and August may see the higher hills in snow.

But there is not the marked change of seasons of the European clime.

Trees shed bark and leaf by gradual process, and are never bare.

However winds may vary, the sun is always hot, and at his magic touch a few days will see Spring, crowned with flowers, leap forth full-grown.

Turn away from the "heads" and the fierce "rip" of Port Philip, the big shallow bay at whose either extremity lie Melbourne and Geelong, and steer eastwards.

The churn of two oceans has cut the old prehistoric peninsula in two at Bass's Straits, making Tasmania an island.

Once round Cape Howe, and with our head due north, we begin the traverse of that more than two-thousand-mile coast, the distance (say) from Gibraltar to Alexandria, which constitutes the Pacific Slope, and the chief seat of Australian activity.

Stormy and even more dangerous by reason of its rocky cliffs, four hundred miles, the distance from London to Edinburgh, brings us to the two harbours of Botany Bay and Port Jackson, and a different clime.

We are at the middle-land between the tropics and the colder south.

The grey gusty skies and changeful seas of the eastern coast of Victoria, where the Antarctic exhausts its final efforts, give place to the mild and tender blue of the true Pacific.

Here heavy and continuous rain falls, and ladens the breezes with moisture.

The north-easter is like a trade wind, and the close, damp heat enervates and enfeebles.

The winter is rawer, therefore, when it is wet, while the summer sky and sea take tender jewelled hues, unequalled in the very tropics.

Another five hundred miles and we are opposite Moreton Bay, another Port Philip, into which the Brisbane river, passing through low-lying mud-flats, empties itself.

The air is milder still, and, when the sun has dropped behind the sombre land in vast aureoles of gold and rose, the stars come close in the wonderful nights, and the larger planets shine with wakes on the waters like little moons.

The mangroves crowd the salt-swamps and sway in the tides.

The sun scorches and devours.

The seasons become more marked—dry season and wet season, winter and summer

month after month of rainless sparkling weather, and then weeks of deluging rain, when the tide, pushing right up the winding course of the river for twenty miles and more, throws back the torrents from the gullies, and floods the flats.

Yet another five hundred miles, and we are past Mackay, the emporium of the sugar plantations; two hundred more, and we enter the blue, waveless tides behind the outer barrier reef and pass Townsville, the metropolis of the North, with its open roadstead, and so on to Cooktown, at the base of the York Peninsula, the most northern city of the slope.

This great barrier reef of coral runs for seven hundred miles down the land, now advancing, now receding, but always leaving a practicable channel for ships, losing itself to the north in the New Guinea straits, and to the south in the sinuosities of the Capricorn Channel.

Admirably lighthoused, navigation by night is yet too risky to be undertaken, except under the most favourable circumstances, and the anchor is let go as darkness comes on, and not heaved till dawn.

During the winter time the climate is divine,

dry, clear, and cool, with every wonder of atmospheric beauty. Summer stands for the ordinary experience of the tropics and subtropics all over the world—somewhat better than Bombay, somewhat worse perhaps than Cairo.

II.

THE SEA-COAST CITIES.

ONCE more we find ourselves on the southern Victorian coast, whence we started, in sight of Cape Otway, and moving up to the “heads” of Hobson’s Bay.

The tide pulses heavily, with the full swell behind it of thousands and thousands of miles of ocean, and the “rip” is often like a cataract.

We pass on rapidly by the channel through shallow, splashing waters to the north-east corner, where masts and funnels cluster round the piers of the city’s ports of Williamstown and Port Melbourne.

The old name of Port Melbourne describes the true nature of the place—Sandridge.

The river, a mean and canal-like stream, which the ingenuous natives, it is said, called “the flowing-flowing” (Yarra-Yarra), winds at

last through mournful flats, muddy and defiled, gouged with perpetual dredging, into the sand-dunes and the bay.

Port towns are pretty much the same wherever our race builds them, and all the hideousness of the alleged "strictly utilitarian" British architect flourishes in these characterless piles of brick.

And round about stretch the barren sands, thick in the detritus of silt and dust, untamed and unannexed by man, swept by the furnace blasts of northern "hot winds" and southern cold winds, and precipitating streams of fragmentary filth upon the town and into the bay.

What species of human habitat has risen so suddenly on such a foundation, in such a climate, and what sort of people live in it?

On this plain, flat and low-lying, where any comprehensive system of drainage is so difficult as to be almost impossible, the mathematical genius has had its chance and taken it.

Imagine a huge chessboard flung on to the earth, and you have what is the true and characteristic Melbourne.

Behind this chessboard is a country of some

eighty-eight thousand square miles (a thousand larger than England, Scotland, and Wales).

There is no other port or means of egress to it.

Geelong, oppressed by a sandy "bar," offers no practicable harbourage, and has sunk almost out of existence.

From Ballarat, the gold city of the west—from Sandhurst (the old Bendigo), the gold city of the northern centre—from all the pastoral land and agricultural land of the whole eighty-eight thousand square miles, everything drains into Melbourne.

There are no rivers.

Railways are the rivers of Australia, and all the Victorian rivers have but one mouth.

Later on we shall see how few mouths the rivers of New South Wales and Queensland have, and shall grow to understand the extraordinary system of centralisation which has made this enormous Australia the appanage of four or five cities.

Gold has poured into Melbourne, not only from within but from without.

Forty years have seen more than three hundred millions drawn from the mines, the large bulk of which has passed into Melbourne.

The million and a quarter of people who inhabit Victoria have borrowed from England, in the shape of public and private loans, from sixty to seventy millions of money.

A severely protective tariff has done its best to make the colony self-supporting by means of ubiquitous "home industries," and already the question of superfluous export for its manufactures, and other exports beside gold and wool, is rising before it.

Melbourne is the phenomenal city of Australia, and its people have in it a pride which is a passion.

The old Anglo-Australian generation which founded its prosperity is quietly but swiftly passing away.

The native Australians who follow on them have too often the self-sufficiency that is begotten on self-confidence by ignorance.

Lean and high-strung, with the alternations of languor and activity which the terrible changefulness of their climate gives them, they wear themselves out in all they do, mistaking the exercise of nervous energy for pleasure.

They have in their underside the taint of cruelty.

The vigorous Anglo-Saxon, with his profuse exclamations of wrath, is giving way to the new exemplar of a suppressed viciousness twice as dangerous.

The more angry the Victorian—and one may as well say the Australian—becomes, the slower he speaks, drawling out his oaths, and staring like a wild beast about to spring.

The street-riots of the Melbourne “larrikin” are as different as can be from the “rows” of the London or Birmingham “rough.”

It is the difference of tigers and bears at angry play.

Educated in a secular manner, even in the denominational grammar-schools, our new-world youth is a pure positivist and materialist.

Religion seems to him, at best, a social affair, to whose inner appeal he is profoundly indifferent.

History is nothing to him, and all he knows or cares for England lies in his resentment and curiosity concerning London, with the tales of whose size and wonders the crowd of travelling “new chums” for ever troubles him.

On the other hand, he is wonderfully free from cant, and when not suspicious of patron-

age or irony, is endowed with much simple friendliness.

In general characteristics the girls are very much the same, only the sexual degree milder.

In Melbourne alone do they trust their intuitions of dress, and achieve a distinct style.

More American than English, they yet want that flavour of Paris which the girl of Boston or New York, of Chicago or San Francisco, seems to possess innately.

Restless, frank, energetic, they have little prudery, and are well able to look after themselves.

But in Melbourne, where much that is typically Australian is to be found, much also is a mere replica at second-hand of the older civilisation.

The closeness to England is the obvious cause of this.

The stream of European civilisation finds here its terminus, and threatens the city with a crude cosmopolitanism.

Melbourne is in reality pagan, but a sort of worldly Presbyterianism has inflicted itself upon its official presentment as the social counterpart of the political stagnation.

Nothing is easier than to mistake this apparently permanent semblance for the true character of the drugged and slumbering mass.

How different a city and people, and with a difference destined to become more and more marked, shall we find gathered round the shores of the one large port of the central eastern coast.

A typical Australian river, surrounded with precipitous gullies, worn out by the purging rainfall, worked its way, through countless unknown ages, down to the gradually sinking coast and the blue Pacific.

The sea rose and rose, driving back the river-mouth, until what was once the last miles of the water-shed became a sea-harbour with a thousand inlets.

The most sacred spot on the slope to the native tribes, this beautiful wonder of nature was to be the first place to fall into the hands of England's infamous convict transportation system.

Something of convictism and the convict still shows itself in Sydney—in the brutality of the old slave-owning official families administering hideous and unrepealed statutes—in the hope-

less criminality of the old lineal descendants of the "lags," gathered together in Woolloomooloo, a small low-lying quarter of their own.

In many cases the convicts made fortunes and rose to high positions, when it was invariably discovered that they had been transported for snaring a hare or stealing a loaf of bread.

A grateful subscription has just placed in the second Pantheon of the Race on the shores of the Thames a memorial of the son of a convict.

English statesmen lately met another in solemn conference.

A third recently showed that actual transportation did not prevent a man from presiding over the deliberations of the legislature of his colony.

The number of those transported to Australia for stealing loaves of bread or snaring hares must have been very large, and it is a singular proof of the innate integrity of these men, of course, that all who subsequently rose to distinction were discovered to be from among their number.

Sydney is a city with charm, with the element of the ideal.

Its sea-gardens, planted right in the centre, are as lovely as anything of their kind in the world.

Nature has done her very best.

The blue waters of the winding harbour are everywhere.

Sunshine, that often seems sempiternal, lights up jewelled hues in the sky and sea as tender as Athens, or Naples, or Cadiz.

The beauty of the inlets and seaside bays is almost equalled by that of the surrounding bush.

And yet the final impression is disappointment.

No European manufacturing city "boasts" more hideous suburbs.

Places like Newtown and Enmore, Paddington and the Glebe, are simply that congerie of bare brick habitations, which is just as much an arid, desolate waste as the mid-desert.

Utterly unrelieved by tree or grass, they oppress the soul and shrivel up every poor little instinct and aspiration towards natural purity and beauty in man, woman, and child.

The shoddy contractor despotises here in his vilest and most hateful shape.

The town is largely one of gullies, Australia's sole variety (except in the higher parts of the Ranges), on flat and open plain, and the streets twist and climb like a knot of serpents.

The two summer months are intolerable with dust and heat, or low, oppressive cloudy skies.

The people have not the restless energy of the Melbournians.

They take things easier.

There has been nothing phenomenal about Sydney—at any rate, in the Australian sense.

It has grown gradually, and only of late years begins to reap the harvest of a prodigious centralisation.

New South Wales is some 310,000 square miles, or six times the area of England, and it is being drained down by the railway system to this one port !

Victoria and Queensland are fought on the extreme borders by outrageous freight tariffs, so as to drag the utmost farthing of the New South Wales products into the New South Wales capital.

And finally, jobbery, political or social, public and private, never had a dearer haunt than this colony.

The natural beauty amidst which he lives, and which is too striking to escape even the most dull, affects the Sydneyite, and his lazy relaxing climate affects him more.

Sunday is rapidly becoming Continental.

Public galleries are open ; concerts are given ; endless trips and picnics about the harbour and to pleasure resorts ; boating and sailing in all sorts of yachts—more and more the characteristics of a careless, pleasure-loving race are developed as secularly-educated Young Australia, the true religious Gallio, gets his own way.

The art sense, too, begins to show itself, and is (as yet) happily ignorant of the didactic.

The Sydneyite, then, is quieter, less assertive, more civilised, and his leanness becomes a sort of symmetry in which the neurotic plays a subordinate part.

He has his own ideas about the vaunted superiority of Melbourne, however, and does not altogether admire the much-vaunted Victorian Girl.

He is exempt from the wilder accesses of enthusiasm.

He does not “rave” about a new opera-bouffe or a metropolitan football match.

The play that succeeds in Melbourne rarely succeeds in Sydney, and *vice versa*.

He awakens to things slowly.

But his tolerance (which is great) must not be mistaken for laziness.

One has not endured all these years the rule of the squattocracy, as voiced in a hopelessly subservient and corrupt legislature, for nothing.

The vested interests, of every kind and description, have grown very strong under this paternal guidance of the cheque-book and snug "Government billets."

The assumption of power by the Younger Generation means a political revolution, and six years ago Young New South Wales was as disinclined for an Armageddon as Young Victoria is to-day.

It is in Queensland, the colony of youth and enterprise, the home of all the daring and restless spirits of Victoria and the South generally, that we shall find political activity and advance.

Queensland, with its enormous territory of 668,000 square miles, thirteen times the size of England, or almost five and a half times the

size of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, is governed from Brisbane, right down in the south-eastern corner, not more than fifty miles from the New South Wales border.

Yet it was merely political accident that frustrated the effort to make it the centre of the railway system of the whole colony !

Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith's scheme of a trans-continental railway would have joined Brisbane to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and made the trend of the rails from the north to the south.

The effect on Queensland, and especially Brisbane, would have been incommensurable in every way.

But it was not to be.

The present system consists of lines running due west every three hundred miles or so ; from Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville, and Cooktown, a more sober effort after a less egregiously centralised prosperity.

Brisbane, even more than Sydney, is a city of gullies, and, beyond the energy of its people and the pleasures of its river and bay and peerless winter climate, has little or nothing to recommend it.

Narrow dusty streets become perfectly in-

tolerable in this sub-tropical climate, where the silly Anglo-Australian dread of ridicule, shown in the insane desire to "follow the fashion," sends men and women about in the clothes of the chilly temperate zone of Europe.

There is no adaptation to the climate.

People eat meat as only the Australians and the English can, the latter also drinking heavy imported beers and spirits with all their national heartiness.

Every one over-works, trying to do as much under this devouring sun as they would do "down south" or in chill and foggy England.

Queensland is but thirty years old, and not 500,000 people live in it, but it owes £24,500,000 of public debt, and the amount can be raised to more than £50,000,000, when it includes the borrowings of corporations and companies.

On the other hand, it produces each year over 70,000 bales of wool, and over £1,500,000 worth of minerals, owning 4,500,000 sheep, and over 500,000 cattle and horses.

The contemplation of figures like these fills the Queenslander with a joyous pride, and helps him to bear the crushing burdens of his

taxation, even in their absurdest shape of a protective tariff, with the smile of faith.

Cheerily does he push northward the black coat and shining "topper" of "civilisation," and, joined at last to the main-stream of things by the fifteen-hundred-mile railway that runs from Adelaide to Brisbane, feels himself not the least worthy member of the barks afloat on it.

Bundaberg, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay, Bowen, Townsville, all are formed on the same model as Brisbane.

The charming tropical dress-costume of white cotton coat with mother-o'-pearl buttons, and white cotton trousers bound up with the crimson scarf of silk, gives way everywhere before the hateful conventional black.

The Kanaka on the sugar-plantations, who was rapidly developing in the white population the aristocratic shame of and contempt for manual labour, is, we are assured, ultimately doomed to disappear before the relentless democracy, and the average civilised man is about to annex what Queenslanders call "the North."

It is not possible to speak of the character-

istics of the Brisbane people as one can of their fellows of Melbourne and Sydney.

Queensland can scarcely be called settled yet.

The Younger Generation, slight in the boys, but blossoming out in the girls into a precocious physical maturity, is ten years younger than that of Victoria and New South Wales.

It has not yet lifted up its voice to speak.

The transplanted Victorian and New South Welshman, inheriting the restlessness of their fathers, are not yet transformed into the distinctive Queenslander.

Perhaps this restlessness will produce here the bilious and fiery genius of the Southern States of America, and prepare the explosive factor in yet another great problem of North and South, democrat and aristocrat.

Perhaps the Democracy will yet succeed in holding it as an appanage for its own more adventurous sons.

It is difficult to say.

III

“ CULTURE ” AND “ SOCIETY. ”

To treat of “ Culture ” and “ Society ” in Australia, in the sense that one does of the greater European capitals, would be like treating of the snakes in Iceland.

Disinterested study is unknown in a country where every one is still in haste to gamble, grab land, or create a business.

The State provides for the mass of the people only the most primary of education, and any advance is in the shape of what will be of service to the direct creators of wealth.

The grammar-schools and denominational colleges take boys no further than the lower fifth of the best English public schools.

The universities are quite as much examining bodies as a national educator.

History is identified with religion, and as

such excluded from the "curriculum"; so that the sense of the poetry of the past and the solidarity of the race is rapidly being lost to the young Australian.

To the next generation of the even fairly educated England will be a geographical expression, and the Empire a myth in imminent danger of becoming a bogey.

A few years ago Matthew Arnold, writing to me on the subject of the future of education in Australia, prophesied that the rich class would send their children to England.

Nothing of the sort is happening.

The first generation, from which he probably argued, has set no abiding fashion.

Fewer and fewer rich Australians will be found at Eton and Rugby, and Oxford and Cambridge.

A batch of travelling scholarships may enable a few university pets to realise (or not) something of what European culture has to teach them.

But the average temper of Australians more and more shows itself either indifferent or hostile to the outer world.

The well-to-do "Australian native" is be-

ginning to get touchy about his nationality and to resent all "importations" from "foreign" lands, while the rich people have not the wits to see the difference between a good education and a bad.

Ten years ago England was spoken of affectionately as the Old Country or Home.

Now it is "home," or more sarcastically "'ome."

The inverted commas make all the difference, and the dropped "h" contains a class contempt.

The Australian who leaves his land in any mood but one severely critical of others, is looked upon as a sort of national "blackleg."

Fashion and reputation can still do something, but the "Australian native" is singularly averse to spending his money on what he does not really care for.

Those who have had to do with the introduction of "high-art shows" of whatever sort to his notice have in almost every case lived to regret it.

There is much "tall talk" to the contrary, of course, with professional people who feel that the public must be fooled at all costs, and the colonial writers of prize-essays are at one with

them here ; but the account-books of the enterprising *entrepreneurs* tell a melancholy tale of love's labour lost.

Melodrama and farce are something more than the staple dramatic feast, and it would be absurd to expect anything else.

Refined acting is not even praised and left to starve ; it is left to starve and jeered at.

Australia is the best place in the world (taking it all round) for the rank and file, and for the rank and file of art and letters no less than of trade and labour.

What, then, is the use of speaking of "culture" and "society" at all as existent here ?

Because the phrases are everywhere merely relative, and there is a class in Australia which stands popularly for both these things just as there is in Europe.

The droll part of it is that Antipodean "society" and "culture" look upon themselves as just the same as their European fellows, and the young colonial takes his social leaders, and painters, and poets quite too seriously.

We have "our Australian" Byrons, and Keatses, and Shelleys, and Tennysons, you

know, and the toilets of Lady Brown and Mrs. Jones and Miss Robinson are the subject of a public attention and record quite as grave and reverent as the sartatorial tomfoolery of London “society organs.”

All the idiotic jargon of the fashionable life of cities like London, Paris, Vienna, Petersburg is transferred to “towns” of two or three streets, with a straggling crowd of wooden “shanties” for the suburbs.

Nor is this class-division merely an empty piece of affectation.

It is the sign of the ever-widening and ever-deepening gulf between the rich and the poor.

Properly speaking, Australia is not yet fifty years old.

It has been created by sheer muscle—by the pick and the shears.

The rich of to-day, the Anglo-Australians, have almost all of them done manual labour of some sort or other themselves.

Ten years ago it was not too much to say that town employer and employee were thoroughly in touch with one another.

With what an astonishing speed and intensity must the process of the aggregation of wealth

have operated to range the two great classes of capital and labour to-day in the bitterest hostility to one another.¹

There will be more to say of this later on.

One wants to see what sort of life this upper class, whose limits are already becoming marked, leads as regard the social and artistic graces.

The little cliques that gather round the governors in the different capitals, and succeed in monopolising them, are mostly Anglo-Australians who have "risen."

Their humorous effort after being "select" is "to draw the line at the shop."

It does not matter having once had a shop and having "made your pile" with a shop.

It suffices to have a shop no longer.

Here, as everywhere, to own land is "the thing," and the number of people who play at being squatters, after having worked hard as tradesmen, steadily increases.

The dulness and niggardliness of one section, that which contains the more serious of these,

¹ This was written before what is called the Great Strike of 1890, the most remarkable feature of which was the excellent organisation of the capitalists engaged in it.

is as appalling as the pretentiousness of the other, the more spendthrift section.

It is the equal *reductio ad absurdum* of "respectability" and "fashion."

In Melbourne and Sydney "religion," in the sense of the most hopelessly dead dogmas of a hopelessly dead ecclesiasticism, is still capable of fluttering all the social dovecots.

The doves have lived outside the influence of modern thought so long and so completely that their bigotry has intensified and gone inwards into the fossilised bones.

One is astonished by periodical exhibitions of this form of imbecility which hold a place in the public interest, long since consigned even in England to the correspondence columns of the more obscure sectarian press.

Melbourne is still genuinely Sabbatarian, keeping its public galleries closed on Sundays, and trying to be unctuously thankful for at least one day's intolerable dulness out of the seven.

But the true trend of things is all in the other direction, and, though Melbourne "society" goes to church (renouncing its Presbyterianism and dissidence with its shop), it is in reality

quite as sinlessly materialistic as Mephistopheles could desire.

Intellectual life, any more than spiritual life, then, there is little or none, and the social life suffers accordingly.

Its crude provincial hedonism is more depressing than it is easy to imagine.

In Melbourne there is plenty of vigour and eagerness, but there is nothing worth being eager or vigorous about.

A smart, philosophical superficiality is something, but there is not even that.

In Sydney languid pale-faced girls show some fondness for flowers and French "lollies," as opposed to the Victorian feminine voracity in the matter of strawberry cream and ices, but this also is presently found to be vanity.

The one saving clause is music.

They both really like music.

In neither case is the article in demand very elevated ; but one is grateful nowadays to find average people really liking anything.

Opera-bouffe is a safe "draw" in the two southern capitals, and the enthusiasm in behalf of Fred Leslie's songs, Nellie Farren's "gag,"

and Letty Lind's multitudinous petticoats was undeniable.

“Society” as a whole went, saw, and was conquered, and even the “goodest” respectable folk were among the saltatory prophets.

A clergyman of high standing and unimpeachable seriousness wrote to what is called the *Times* of Australia, to point out the distinct and peculiar modesty of Miss Lind's multitudinous undergarments,—and nobody smiled!

Literary society is the synonym for the company of journalists, and has superseded the old Bohemianism.

A second-rate and third-rate pseudo-intellectualism reigns in it, and only too often it becomes a pseudo-intellectualism of no rate at all.

It finds and deserves no published means of expression beyond that afforded in the Saturday's conversational columns of the dailies and weeklies, or in the *Bulletin*.

The *Bulletin* is the one really talented and original outcome of the Australian press, but its literary criticism is that of clever, sixth-form schoolboys and imperfectly-educated pressmen, and all it knows about culture is to perpetually spell it “culchaw.”

And of what sort are these weeklies and dailies?

The power of the press is a very considerable fact everywhere ; but in Australia, where "Society" is impotent and wealth not yet fully organised, the newspaper is the best if not the greatest institution in the country.

Its legitimate profits have so far been large enough to keep it pure.

The principal proprietors in all but the big metropolitan dailies are journalists themselves.

Many have "made" their own papers, or even where the editor is merely an employee, he is left a free hand in the formulation of his "policy" to a degree unknown in England and in the central and eastern American States.

This condition is only transitory, and is, indeed, rapidly passing away, like every other disinterested influence ; but it has lived long enough to establish a tradition, and traditions die hard.

There are no Conservative newspapers in Australia in the English sense : the choice is between Liberalism and Radicalism.

Melbourne has a third-rate daily avowedly

clerical in its sympathies,¹ but the secularisation of the press is also quite unmistakable.

Liberal and Radical secularisation, therefore, must be taken as so universal as to have become all but an editorial business necessity.

The Melbourne *Argus* paid for its erstwhile effort after undisguised Toryism by the transformation of a feeble rival into one of the most powerful and richest newspapers in Australia and by the loss of all political influence.

Its Sydney fellow, the *Morning Herald*, the richest of all (making, it is said, something like £80,000 per annum clear profits) has been too wise to take any decided position whatever, with the accompanying risks.

Its timidity, like the temerity of the *Argus*, costs it all political influence; but politics never much troubled its quiet and commercial soul, and in its correspondence columns the most venerable and rabid reactionary "crank" can, and does, express himself to the full.

The *Age*, the rival of the *Argus* just alluded to, is the only Australian daily with a really large circulation (over 90,000).

¹ "Has" must now become "had." The Melbourne *Daily Telegraph* is a thing of the past.

It is, indeed, the very mouthpiece of Melbourne and Victoria.

Every virtue and every vice of that singular little democracy are expressed by it with a clearness and an emphasis which are either profoundly instinctive or profoundly unscrupulous.

Probably they are both.

All the turbulence and caprice, which flamed out of old at the Eureka Stockade and initiated Protection with the wild work of "Black Wednesday," have long been diverted from party politics by the adroit cajolery of the satisfied leaders, and the *Age* has been left to preside over the new fact established.

The caprice and turbulence are there, but they are drained off into frivolous and irrelevant channels—popular "crazes" concerning everything from football matches and opera-bouffe to the survivors of the Balaclava charge.

The *Age* has a box full of red-herrings with which to put Democracy off the trail of change, and another box full of sops with which to stop it if it is savage and resolute not to turn aside.

Some of the sops are drugged; and the

blood-hound is asleep now, hunting only in dreams.

In the hour, however, when he awakens and will do with nothing but human flesh, the *Age* will doubtless turn bacchant again, and perhaps be even able to persuade him that she has been souling him on all the time.

Very different was the "democracy" of the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, which once bid fair on legitimate lines to become an equal power in New South Wales, but an educator as well.

For years the paper languished under mismanagement, letting the *Herald* have things all its own way.

At last, when it had reached its lowest ebb, it fell into the hands of a small party of secessionists, who had found the "responsibility" of the older office too oppressive and its "respectability" too obviously akin to vanity and vexation of spirit.

They made a new paper of it almost from the start.

Frankly and unreservedly Liberal, it put itself at the head of the nascent party of progress, and called for organisation and reform.

It became the most readable daily in

Australia, and the organ of the younger generation in the Mother Colony.

In the first fierce encounter of Protection and Free Trade the *Telegraph* profited by the timidity of the *Herald*, and became the banner-bearer of the old Fiscalism, gloriously victorious.

In its columns, freely open to both sides as well as to the advocacy which viewed Free-Trade and Protection as equally deaf to the claims of labour, the controversy waxed and waned, till the next election returned equal parties.

The dailies in the other colonies differ too slightly from those already described to need specialising.

One would have thought that the restless political energy of Queensland would have produced something journalistically fresh and characteristic, but this has not been the case, and Brisbane still astonishes the new arrival by the leisurely issue of a single twopenny morning paper.

On the other hand, the *Courier* has never wanted the saving faculty of progressiveness, and each new phase of the desires and

aspirations of the community has found in it more or less satisfactory expression.

But is there nothing in all this Australian press which can be called the peculiar outcome of the country?—something that is found in Australia and nowhere else?

When all is said and done, not only are all the dailies either mere replicas or slight variations on the London newspapers, but their circulation is severely restricted, and can in no sense be called Australian.

Even the *Age* is to be found in Victoria alone.

Queensland does not see the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*: indeed, north of Moreton Bay does not see the *Courier*, but each terminus of the east-to-west railway lines has its own particular paper.

The same is almost as true of the weekly issues of the dailies, sent into the bush to the stations and selections.

The *Australasian*, that of the *Argus*, it is true, still struggles to retain a more than Victorian circulation, due to the literary reputation won by a former editor, but which has been rapidly lost in less skilful hands.

The *Queenslander*, the weekly issue of the *Brisbane Courier*, has fallen on a similar fate, and is sinking more and more into even local insignificance.

A happy combination of circumstances left the field free for a golden chance.

On that chance, even in its earlier and more meagre shape, a man of genius, the one journalist of genius in Australia, seized with all the energy of a profound and passionate intuition.

Expansion on expansion has followed on his restless, discontented craving to reach to his own ideal of what his paper should be.

The arrival of the *Bulletin* is an event in the coast towns from Port Darwin to Perth, and it is the same in New Zealand.

The paper is national, and in a far deeper and truer sense than can be said of the English *Punch*, or the American *Puck* or *Judge*.

Punch is a mere "Society" paper, with no appeal whatever beyond the classes.

It is almost as bad with its New York fellows.

The *Bulletin* is the terror of the nascent classes of Australia, who profess to ignore it,

but its nicknames are part of the every-day speech of every one, and in the atmosphere created by its ceaseless ridicule, solemn impostures find it difficult to flourish.

Sir Samuel Griffith, who has suffered by its not by any means always just satire more than any other politician, except Sir Henry Parkes, frankly owns that the reading of it is his "tonic."

A back-block shearer once said to me: "If I'd only one sixpence left, I'd buy the *Bulletin* with it."

The premier of a colony far distant from Sydney, the place of its publication, remarked to me: "The *Bulletin*? Oh, yes! But does it sell much here? I can't tell you. *Of course I read it myself!*"

What has been the reason of this astonishing success?

Primarily the genius of Archibald, the man who made it, who knew not only how to give to it the priceless contribution of his own Voltairian personality, but who knew also how to enlist in its behalf all the real literary and artistic talent available in the new land.

It is the only mouthpiece of originality in Australia.

Republicanism seasoned by Socialism, Fiscal Protection as a means to the first, and ruthless and unscrupulous satire of all authority as a means to the second—this is its “policy.” It has, however, its limitations, as we have seen, and they are grave in so powerful a general influence.

Where, then, can “Culture,” in even the most modified form, be said to exist in a community such as this ?

It is necessary to take a very humble view of it, remembering that, as regards what has been called disinterested study and the true appreciation of art and letters and science, Melbourne is six weeks worse off than Manchester, and Sydney than Sheffield.

The universities have, as I have hinted, been a failure.

Too timid to boldly make themselves samples of the modern educational theory, they have limited their appeal to the exhausted Anglo-Australian tradition.

In Sydney alone of the continental cities of the Slope do we find any organised remains of the old English officialism of the convict and regimental days ; but it was in the interests of

this narrow-minded and insignificant horde, reinforced by their allies, the "pure merinos" (the big squatters), that a university was built up on the played-out model of the old Oxford.

The popular indifference to it has been profound.

Of late years it has been galvanised into energy as an examining body, and there has been an effort to meet some of the demands of the modern theory, but to small purpose.

Another of Matthew Arnold's prophecies to me was that the grammar-schools—the Australian grammar-schools—would not be able to make those they trained into a class and a power.

And this also is turning out all the other way; but this class and this power are not affected to any appreciable extent by the pseudo-culture of the universities, and never will be.

If the universities had had the intelligence to perceive the peculiar character necessary to vitalise their teaching, and the courage to make themselves the mouthpiece of the vague educational aspirations of the community, it might have been otherwise.

As it is, they are paying and will continue to pay for their want of courage and insight by their impotence, and will have Culture forced upon them from without instead of evolving it themselves from within.

In the meantime the pseudo-intellectualism of the cleverer journalists, with all its harmful ignorance or even more harmful superficiality, is the will-o'-the-wisp offered to the callow Australian intelligence as spiritual companion and guide.

It would seem as if one could not but conclude that "Culture" at the Antipodes is in as bad a way as "Society."

IV.

THE MEN OF MARK.

IT cannot be helped if, in one's sketches of some Australian notabilities, one rouses to fury the whole cry of the Anglo-Australians.

The choice of several of these personages will be impugned ; the effort to portray them frankly and unaffectedly will be impugned still more.

Servile sheep millionaires, who realised their fortunes in days utterly unlike the present, and are spending the proceeds of them in the agonising effort to storm the gates of London "society," may have been Australian men of mark once, but they are so no longer.

When a butcher in a little Queensland sea-port carries through his claims, after a struggle as severe as it was protracted, to the lion's share of the richest gold-mine in the world—enters, an untried man, into a powerful ministry—shows

himself the worthy antagonist of the strongest politician in Australia—expels that politician from the leadership of the party which he had created—grasps the Treasury—administers it admirably, and is only hurled from office by an unscrupulous Coalition (and all this done in the most characteristically simple Australian temper and style)—then we have a millionaire who is certainly a man of mark, and utterly unknown though he is (one could almost say out of Queensland), he is surely worthy some attention.

The really interesting people are those who are influential, or will be influential, or ought to be influential.

Those who have perchance once been so, but are so no longer, and are never likely to be so again, are on a lower plane.

This is, at any rate, the principle acted upon here, and if I begin with a concession to my good Anglo-Australian friends, it is only because, memorial of the past though I take him to be, Sir Henry Parkes has still influence in New South Wales, and perhaps even in the other colonies—and then, you know, he is the only Australian name which is in any way familiar to the general run of Englishmen.

Moreover, it is freely to be admitted that he is, now that old Sir John Robertson has been gathered to his fathers, the unique epitome of two generations of the political life of the mother colony, and this former phase of things, though it is passing rapidly away, should also be understood by Englishmen.

Well, imagine the man as he is in his place in Parliament.

Large and gross in build, with a great mass of white hair running all over his head and face, he rises full of a self-conscious pomposity, and startles one's ears with a piping treble.

The inane and tedious vulgarity of the rhetoric—the appalling aspirates dropped and added in every sentence—the hideous grammatical and prosodial blunders, seem the fitting expression of an egotism as empty as it is oppressive.

How astonishing that even in what, until quite recently, was the most lethargic and corrupt of the colonies, such a person could ever attain to political influence!

But Sir Henry Parkes requires care in the studying, and even then the part he has played, and is still playing, is not comprehensible with-

out some historical knowledge of the conditions, past and present, of the stage, the actors, and the audience.

Watch and listen to him when the wheels of debate begin to glow.

Of late he has too often been feeble and languid, sitting huddled up with weary blinking eyelids, the not unpathetic image of a big, sick anthropomorphoid ape, well stricken in years.

But that has only made the occasional exhibitions of his "old form" the more striking.

Attacked (and no politician in Australia has been habitually attacked with such virulent personal animus as he), he is a new man.

See him now upon his feet, with all his hair, beard, and features vibrating with pugnacity.

The rhetoric is as vulgar as ever, but no one could call it tedious or inane.

At his best he has few equals, fewer superiors in Australia for impassioned grasp of his subject, especially when it is on those broader lines where the average rank and file of these provincial politicians are always weakest.

In this mood he shows that he is the born fighter all over, and he shows also that it is brains (and in the somewhat unexpected shape

of a large intellectual receptivity) with which he backs up a reckless audacity.

In his youth Sir Henry Parkes had been a Chartist in England.

His early manhood found him a counter-jumper in a Sydney toy-shop, eager to show his parts by impassioned and turbid "spouting" against "the pure merinos"—the squattocracy and officialism of the hour.

These were the days of "free labour"—the convict transportation system which was turning the large landlords into aristocrat slave-owners after the pattern of the American South, and the young demagogue did good service for the New South Wales democracy under the fiery self-righteous guidance of Dr. Lang, the Scotch dominie to whom Australia owes the basis of her local self-governments.

It took years for this Aristophanic Cleon to grasp the Parliament of his colony in his coarse and violent hands—to persuade it that his high-flown bombast was the only true model for your local politician who desired to succeed, and that the deadliest method of attack was a virulent, brutal, and personal invective.

In all this he was indeed a past master, and

when once his dominancy of the House was secured, no self-respecting (one might almost say no respectable) man for years and years dared to affront him.

The terrible defects of his qualities ruined him, of course, in the process of time, so soon as his triumph reached the pitch of virtual dictatorship (1878-1883), and his fall was in its way even more ruinous than that of Mr. Gladstone in 1874, or Lord Beaconsfield in 1880.

But he had done his work.

He had given the tone to parliamentary life, and, if he could only persist, cool and intelligent observers saw that he would have yet another chance.

No one could have fallen lower as a living political force than he had now—swamped with the scandal of his bankruptcies—utterly forsaken and alone.

Yet he defiantly raised himself from the blackest depth of this, old man as he was—formed first a little parliamentary clique, then an organised minority, fighting and intriguing ferociously, until the rapid turn of the tide carried him again into power with an overwhelming majority.

Then once more, of course, came the inevitable tale of all his personal perversities, culminating, after a drawn battle at the polls, that should have been a second victory, in an effort at mutiny in his own camp.

But skilful architect of his own ruin as he ever was, reflection soon taught all intending successors to his place that he was the even more skilful architect of the ruin of others, and his savage threat of pulling their house about their ears cowed the party into a last acceptance of his leadership.

Viewed from the purely intellectual point of view (the only one that permits of anything like sympathy for him), his career must be highly praised.

What superb courage he has shown, courage backed, under all storm and stress of combat and defeat, by a genuine mental capacity, by the ability to seize on every new political phase, every new political idea that arrived, and turn it with an audacious adroitness to his own purposes.

An absolute adventurer, a thoroughgoing soldier of fortune, backed by neither capital nor caucus, and with immense forces arrayed against

him, his own insuppressible peculiarities the most immense of all, he has survived a Moscow and eluded a Waterloo.

The stage is small : the audience tenth-rate, and the mumming necessarily of the same class, but that must not blind us to the power of the principal performer on his own lines.

After all, everybody loves an adventurer—whether he be a Jack Sheppard or a Warren Hastings, a Turpin or a Napoleon, and the bushranger variety of the type has never wanted for admirers.

This Ned Kelly of colonial politics, this unregenerate Gladstone of New South Wales (for he has known how to combine something of the two), may yet jockey himself into a local immortality, as the father of Australian Federation, and die in the odour of political sanctity, remembered only for his participation in a result which he spent his best years and efforts in fractiously postponing !

But he must be quick, for the New Australian Politician is upon him, and that practical and work-a-day individual has but a scanty sympathy and a scantier reverence for the prodigal

public purveyor of nothing much more verifiable than "words, words, words."

A new parliamentary epoch has come into existence, largely as a reaction against the old one, which, in expiring, has afforded Sir Henry his last success.

The choice of the men of mark among the exemplars of this latest type, the clearly dominant political type of the immediate Australian future, is a veritable *embarras de richesse*.

"The magic hand of chance," based on such uncounted casualties as private means, local opportunity, nay, even physique, will decide the survival of the few from among many who, from the point of view of mere "fitness," are all more or less equal.

The idea of leaders who are primarily delegates, and only secondarily (if at all) candidates for a "career," is just as much a common Australian national trait as the belief in the general advantages of trade-unionism.

The upper class shares it impartially with the lower.

Thus the duration of parliaments grows shorter and shorter.

Four years is on the eve of passing into

three, and the agitation for annual dissolutions is within sight, and is only likely to be abrogated by the adoption of the principle of the referendum.

There are, then, three or four men in the political life of each of the four principal colonies who could be taken as possible or probable influences ; but I shall fix on the only one of them in whom the general characteristics of the class are sublimated by the notable idiosyncrasies of the individual.

No politician seems so secure of a future, and a large future.

Even the shrewd, antique sagacity of Mr. Service, the "safest" of all his tribe, indulged in high-pitched eulogy of Sir Samuel Griffith.

Thus he spoke at the first Federal Council : "I think," he said, "the minds of all the members of the Council, and the minds of all the colonies in the Federation, will turn with one accord to the central figure."

It is as the central figure in reality, as opposed to Sir Henry Parkes, the central figure in appearance, at the recent Confederation Convention at Sydney, that Englishmen ought to regard Sir Samuel Griffith.

The very drafting of the Bill is his, and the spirit of it is more nearly his than that of any other single person, or any group of persons.

What manner of man is this ?

For, whether for good or evil, he has already established his hold on the general consciousness of his countrymen.

A glance at him in his place in Parliament reveals at once the by no means insignificant fact that he stands for a specimen of the Australian gentleman.

This is a quite different thing from the English gentleman, just as Sydney Grammar School and University (where he was educated) are quite different places from Rugby (say) and Oxford.

By birth he comes from the English, or, rather, Welsh lower middle-class, his father being an aggressive, fanatical, little dissenting minister—the immemorial religious log-roller.

Sir Samuel's speech quickly bewrays another significant fact concerning himself.

He is a lawyer, or let me say that he is an Australian barrister, for that also means something fairly actual and definite.

Puritan self-righteousness, heightened by

educated and social superiority—it is just these acquired influences which render outward and visible form to the icy and colourless clearness of an essentially intellectual nature.

He is, by general admission, the first legal counsel, especially as a prosecutor, in Australia.

No other man has dared to submit the intricacies of law, pure and undefiled, to the understandings of average colonial juries and average members of Assembly.

He has dared to do so repeatedly, and has many times achieved his daring.

Nothing but years of cruel over-work in a cruel climate, both in the House and at the Bar, have succeeded in robbing him of his calm self-satisfaction, and struck out of him some sparks of human passion.

Disinterested to the pitch of a pedantic self-consciousness in his use of political patronage (still a very distinct form of public bribery, especially in Queensland), his supercilious suspicion of the motives of every one, supporters and opponents alike, has prevented him from making (I had almost said) a single friend.

Terribly wanting in frankness and generosity,

the larger view of men and things alike escapes him.

This man, who may some day be the political dictator of Australia, as he has been of Queensland, can be spitefully malignant to those who have attacked him.

The divided sovereignty of his instincts, inherited and acquired, makes him—him the worshipper of textual logic—perverse and inconsistent.

Power is his only lust, vanity his only weakness.

It seems to require the effort to win or retain the supremacy over his fellows to make him thrill and glow, and even then the heat of him is white, not red.

He has naturally the parochial timidity of the scion of the lower English middle-class, the hapless race of petty Dissenting shopkeepers, always ready to be scared at big stakes and extended issues; and his profession has added the meticulous timidity of the genuine lawyer.

Both have combined to make him voracious in matters of detail, and no minister has such a reputation for remorselessly controlling his

department down to its pettiest items of expenditure or discipline.

At the same time, his cultivated intellect struggles vainly to grasp social and political developments where only instinctive emotionalism is of any use, because it is the largely predominating quality in play in those who are creating these developments.

All this, taken together, has resulted in his becoming the most flagrant of Opportunists ; and this cautious, cold-blooded lawyer stands committed to the most incommensurable schemes of what, even in Australia, is called out-and-out Socialism !

No responsible political leader in the world has announced a programme within sight of that which he flung to the Labour Party in the hour of his savage struggle to retain a second lease of dictatorial power in 1888.¹

It would more than satisfy even Mr. Cunningham Graham, the irreconcilable foe of Tory and Liberal, Radical and Old Trade Unionist alike.

Well, it has all led to nothing. Driven by the irresistible trend of things into a coalition

¹ See Appendix.

with Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith, he has had to sanction, as Premier of their Ministry, the severe measures which broke up the great Shearers' Strike in Queensland : he has had to give the lie to every pledge of his political leadership by introducing an extension of Coolie Labour in the North and by consenting to a Land Grant Railway scheme. The approaching general elections will show us the comment of the local Labour Party, which once idolised him. Meantime young, more or less educated Australia believes in Sir Samuel Griffith because it knows him to be an educated Australian gentleman ; that is to say, an open-minded secular individual, dressing neatly, speaking correctly, moderately plebeian at heart, and moderately attached to his country.

The respectable and religious section see in his parentage a guarantee of his being at heart benignly disposed, and listen to him quoting from Scripture as he defends the local C. D. Act without impugning his sincerity or alluding to the pretty notorious fact of his religious indifferentism.

The workmen, the argumentative Socialistic Australian city workmen, are (or were) agog at

his extreme utterances, and they have more than once dragged him through the Brisbane streets in his carriage,—facing with a strange and sneering self-satisfaction a raging storm of cheers, a singular spectacle for gods and men ! Every one believes in his political purity and disinterestedness, and almost as firmly as he does himself. What will a nature of his intense and indecisive complexity make of a momentous opportunity if it is offered to him ?

If I were an Australian who loved my country, I should tremble at the thought.

One other political type demands its place imperatively—the one type really great and inspiring in public life—the man of force and enthusiasm—the man of genius.

I seem to myself to have expressed my conviction concerning the more or less immediate future of Australia when I agreed to see in Sir Samuel Griffith the probable “central figure” of it.

Yes, that future appears to me to be a fairly peaceful form of national progress.

But who knows ?

Australia may yet leap into genuine national being, full-armed like Athene.

Will she, too, like her elder sister of America, require her baptism to be one of fire and blood, either a 1776 or an 1863?

If this be so, then everything will be changed.

The *tribunus plebis* will be "the central figure," and in whom could Australia find such a presentation of it as in her one strong politician—her one potential, if not actual statesman?

Let us view Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith in his place in Parliament as we have viewed the others.

Large and gross in build, he has the big, heavy set face of what the *fin de siècle* Parisians have learned to call the "struggle-for-lifeur."

The nose is like the beak of the bird of prey; the large, firm mouth and square chin, the strong, clamped jaw, the marked outlines of which not even the too abundant flesh and fat can hide—not one of the true characteristics is wanting.

He sits, ordinarily, with the stolid impassivity of an Indian idol cut in bronze—strong, stolid, heavy, and puissant; nothing betraying the activity which can galvanise his awkward

bulk but the hawk-like eyes, glancing and penetrative.

He is, so far as manner goes, one of the worst average debaters in any Assembly.

He hesitates, and even stutters, coughing and *er-ing* in his pursuit of the exact "business word" he wants.

What he says is always well worth listening to, but he usually says it detestably.

His dress is careless, even slovenly.

He is no master of detail.

As a capitalist and ubiquitous speculator, he endures a business *corvée* almost as severe as Sir Samuel Griffith at the Bar, and this, added to the rigours of the tropic summer, has done him even more cruel physical wrong.

But he grasps all he touches with big and powerful fingers—absolutely in earnest about every essential, as he conceives of such, absolutely indifferent about every trifle.

The largeness of the temper of the man is a perfect delight.

It permeates all he thinks, says, and does.

His estimates of his bitterest enemies are tolerant and generous, not merely before the footlights, but in the friendliest privacy.

He feels he is big and strong enough to do justice to every one.

He is the only public man in Australia whom, by any stretch of the term, one could call great.

From his very first entry into the politics of his colony he brought large and fecund ideas before the people.

Australia, as a veritable nationality, self-supporting through a protective tariff erected against the world and dominant through a Monroe doctrine of the Pacific—a transcontinental railway that should by now have run the iron girdle from Perth through Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney, to Brisbane, and from thence to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and brought Australia face to face with China, India, and Africa—such were his public schemes ten and twenty years ago, as to-day.

His annexation of New Guinea was disallowed by England.

For years he was the sole protectionist member north of the Murray, his colony trusting itself to his word then, that he would not tamper with Free Trade, as implicitly (I would I could also say as justifiably) as it did in 1888, when he said he would accept the extermina-

tion of the coolies from the tropical north as final, "until the country chose to come to its senses."

It is in the hours of passionate debate or turbulent public gathering that this clumsy and uneloquent orator should be seen by those who would comprehend something of the vehement enthusiasm of his followers.

Then the torrent of his fiery words is overwhelming.

The splendid consistency of his political career ; the absolute trust of every one, friend or foe, in his word when once given ; his simplicity and directness in all his dealings, passing into a warm-hearted kindness towards all those who are drawn, often despite themselves, by the strong magnetism of his bluff and genial sincerity—these are some of the elements from which he has created a unique position.

Yes, he alone of his fellows has something of the element of the miraculous in him.

Call it, if you please, as his opponents do, the instinct of the gambler—the insensate cry of "Double or quits !"

Yet it is just the possession or the non-

possession of this quality that lifts the first-rate man (whatever be his standard of excellence), in all places and in all times, right up above his second-rate companion.

Cæsar had it ; Napoleon had it ; and they knew what it was to risk all, and win by risking.

Hannibal had it not ; Robert Lee had it not ; and therefore they never quite risked all, and therefore we can never tell if they might not have won all.

I call this element the miraculous, because it enables one man to succeed where a thousand otherwise his equals would never face failure.

Rarely in the public life of any community is there more than one individual in any degree the possessor of it, to whom is given the supreme chance of the momentous opportunity.

Australia has such a man.

What will local politics, business complications, and the savagery of the climate do with him, before even the larger stage of national life, to which his steady gaze looked first, and ever unflinchingly, is cleared for the lifting of the curtain ?

There are several other politicians of whom I should like to treat, because there is a type of man which, without very much original force in itself, without one spark of greatness or genius, is capable of the most important results.

Thoroughly master of itself, fearless, industrious, able, it may develop by the stimulus of favourable circumstances to an astonishing height.

And in Australia this type is becoming almost national.

Queensland has perhaps just at present as many remarkable political possibilities as all the other colonies put together; but there is rapidly coming to the front in New South Wales a higher average of administrative integrity and competency, and Victoria only requires an end of the political stagnation caused by the everlasting rule of an effete coalition caucus, to do the same.

Macrossan, the leader of the North Queensland planters, had a personality as fascinating as it was picturesque.

The new Irishman, the Irish American, the Celt of abrupt transitions from sombre silence to a vehemence that is demoniac—a sort of

plebeian cousin of Parnell—a desperate intriguer and fighter—the conspirator who, by the most unscrupulous and audacious plots on record in colonial politics, for a few moments grasped the helm, in defiance of the whole wrathful democracy—then, struck down by a combination apparently as audacious and unscrupulous, died suddenly, prematurely, having extorted terms of something like victory for his cause. What a charming and characteristic sketch of the excited politics of a small colonial community could be given in the history of his last few years!

Mr. Pattison, the Mount Morgan millionaire, who stepped from behind his butcher's block into power and place, fulfilling admirably his position as Treasurer of Queensland after a political apprenticeship of a few months—I have already mentioned him.

Mr. Morehead, with his humorous energy, as much the born leader of colonial squatters as Lord Salisbury of English landlords; Mr. Groom, the eternal apostle of shopkeeping democratic respectability, despite the most untoward early accidents—all these are Queenslanders.

We come, in Mr. Bruce Smith, to the more sober and solid class of the latest political phase in New South Wales—Mr. Bruce Smith, of the family of the one powerful native steamship line, the perfect mouthpiece of Australian capitalism, undeniably democratic, but resolute for “law and order” and the privilege of his class.

And one is driven to at least mention Mr. Dibbs, the man whose childish vanity and senile incompetence have made his leadership of the New South Wales Protectionist Party the perpetual experience for them all of the proverbial ditch, and who now once more succeeds to a lease of impotent rule.

Then there is Mr. Alfred Deakin, the Victorian native of ability, tempered by the Anglo-mania of the rich Melbournians to schemes of Imperial Federation, but at heart undecided, waiting his hour and chance.

Sir Graham Berry, the little ex-grocer and violent cart-spouter, the demagogic firebrand extinguished under piles of loaves and fishes, now quite imperturbed and rather sick of it all, but still fitfully restive to the spur of local ambition.

Mr. Service, the canny, senile Scotchman, listened to with respect as a preacher of monetary moderation, but more and more disregarded by a community which will bear neither whip nor rein on the financial road to (let us say) embarrassment.

These are a few names gathered almost at hazard from among the captains of the political army of only the three eastern colonies.

But it is not in these, or their fellows, that the future is to be found, or anything like it.

Young Australia holds the future, and these lesser lights of the transition period from Anglo-Australia to Australia will have little chance to shine through the coming years except in so far as they can adapt themselves to the new conditions.

Meantime Young Australia has not yet found its voice, and who shall prophesy the words which it presently shall utter, not to say the deeds which it presently shall do?

In literature, science, and art, the men of mark do not exist.

One poet of mark, Adam Lindsey Gordon—one writer of delightful prose, Marcus Clarke (of both of whom I shall have to speak presently)

—formed but the brilliant dawn of a cloudy, colourless day.

Mail steamer and cable have brought England too close.

Her popular literature has swamped all native originality, and exotic and specialised culture is not yet possible in a community vulgarised throughout by the headlong race for wealth.

A crowd of minor poets, minor story-tellers, minor critics, is the raw material from which something good and characteristic may yet proceed.

One or two of the younger poets have perhaps struck a truer note (such are Mr. Thomas Heney and Mr. Sydney Jephcott), but they are oppressed by the local reputations, which are wonderfully swollen by colonial ignorance and vanity, and only afford bad models and inferior poetic personalities.

Writers like Harpur or Kendall in nowise count, even in Australia, except *faute de mieux*.

A few snatches of high verse from Mr. Brunton Stephens, a few samples of quaint and delicate humour—smothered in a clattering surge of popular “jingle”—these are the

sole contemporary contributions to serious literature.

The truth is obvious.

Only two forms of the national life are yet strong enough and have sufficient volume to produce men of mark, and these two forms are politics and trade, and in politics is included journalism.

Unfortunately I do not know the commercial life of the leading colonies intimately, and the transactions of the colonial capitalists do not strike me as containing the personal element to the point of the picturesque.

There are no Australian Vanderbilts and Goulds yet.

Each colony has its one port—Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide—where its own trade is transacted with a local isolation that is astonishing.

When Federation brings a uniform Australian tariff all this will be changed.

Meantime the sheep millionaires are not very interesting personages, and though some of them own immense properties, properties of millions of acres, and shear annually several hundreds of thousands of sheep, their personal

effect on the national life is but beginning to be felt.

- The terrible struggle of the Big Strike has created an epoch.

In five years the chief and most aggressive Australian capitalists will be as interesting as they are important.

Meantime I am brought back to the journalists.

And yet the first and most typical example I should take is, after all, in reality not nearly so much a journalist as a capitalist, and this marks absolutely the present state of transition in these things.

The one Australian journalist of genius, Mr. Archibald, of the *Sydney Bulletin*, I have already spoken of at certain length, and ready as I should be to attempt to give a portrait sketch of what has long seemed to me the most fascinating personality in Australia, that would be to tax my readers with a too fresh repetition.

The next journalist I should have chosen, Mr. Ward, who "made" the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, and was till quite recently the strongest personal force as an editor in Aus-

tralia, is also unfortunately debarred me. He is no longer in the country.

One is left with nothing but the newspaper proprietors—men who have in almost every case (Mr. Archibald is the shining exception) more and more gravitated from the literary to the business side of journalism.

It is a coincidence, pointing back significantly to the “old colonial days” and the state of affairs then, that no less than three of the chief of these were originally “comps,” two of them in the very newspaper offices which they subsequently owned and managed, and the third in other offices.

John Fairfax, the recent owner of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, was a “comp.”

Mr. David Syme, the present owner of the *Age*, originally not only wrote the “copy” of his first broadsheet, but “set up” the major portion of it.

Mr. Buzacott, the principal owner of the *Brisbane Courier*, recalls similar experiences in the provincial press.

I could wish for no better subjects, subjects more important and instructive for English readers, than the informing spirits of the

Age, the *Bulletin*, and the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*.

Two of these are, and the third was until quite recently, the most characteristic and powerful expressions of the place and the people—of the sentiment which will have to be reckoned with in all serious relations with them—of what is the true motive-power of the budding national life.

Newspapers like the Melbourne *Argus* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* are all very well in their way.

They have a somewhat higher literary standard perhaps than their rivals ; their sense, such as it is, of culture and the aching need for culture in the community, is a factor I for one should never depreciate or under-rate.

But their political influence is insignificant.

They are mere mouthpieces of the antique Anglo-Australia, the *Argus* stupidly and fanatically so, the *Herald* cautiously and calmly, and their editors, able, intelligent, and even liberal-minded men though they may be, have not enough free play to become personal influences.

In all these cases, however, one's right to attempt to portray individuals in the style I

have qualified as the frank and unaffected, seems to me to be rather dubious.

The outer life of such men is obviously very much on the debatable land between publicity and privacy.

Public life is public life, and a man who enters upon it counts, or ought to count, the cost.

His personal peculiarities, his mannerisms, his voice, action, dress, are all, up to a given point, fair game to the contemporary artist of manners.

But the man of business, the merchant or manager in his office, the editor in his *sanctum*, the author in his home, the labour-organiser with his committee—surely these have the right, if they desire it, of personal privacy.

Let me in the partial vagueness and anonymity of the last of my sketches, where I shall deliberately modify certain details, do my best to respect that right, and, if my friends shall think I have in any way overstepped the limits of discretion, let me plead the importance of the attempt to give Englishmen some real idea of the “form and pressure” of the practical personification of not the least noteworthy of Australian men of mark, of the controlling

spirit of the average influential Australian newspaper.

Here, then, is our Australian Greeley.

In person we have the medium-sized, thick-set, middle-aged colonial man of business.

No one feature is remarkable ; all are broad, coarse, and strong.

Brown thin hair, moustache, and beard ; full, pallid, but sensual lips ; eyes of mixed colour, blue predominating, energetic and direct.

Aggressive, good-humoured, but at the price of directing and controlling every practical detail ; educated up to the average standard and not an inch over ; despising intellect and culture as associated with inevitable business weaknesses ; thoroughly indifferent to religion, but, if pressed, showing the genuine secular dislike and contempt of "parsons" which lies hid in nine Australians out of ten ; democratic, in the sense of admitting no superiors, but a vast host of inferiors—such is the man who "manages" the most perfect daily expression of the vast bulk of the people in the one really settled and organised colony of Australia.

He knew Adam Lindsey Gordon, and has

absolutely nothing to tell you concerning him but that he rode "savagely."

Marcus Clarke's name recalls merely the fact of his journalistic Bohemianisms. "He was the plague of my life for so many years."

No suspicion whatever that this is the one Australian prose writer who counts.

"We have half a dozen men on the paper who can write stories as well as Clarke could."

It is astonishing !

One recalls Clarke's definition of the future Australian type as "a tall, coarse, strong-jawed, greedy, pushing, talented man, excelling in swimming and horsemanship. His religion will be a form of Presbyterianism, his national policy a democracy tempered by the rate of exchange."

The religion is a touch still to be added ; but the conquest of Victoria by the churches is already a possibility, a conquest which, like that of the American West, can only be bought at the price of an utter loss of all spirituality ; and, if it happens, then beyond a doubt this man's newspaper will be seen also among the prophets, the new secular Saul, the gigantic herd "boss" who went out after some of

his uncle's asses and found the kingdom of heaven.

But meantime, although the dominant Melbourne clique supports the sects, it is doubtful how much of the dominancy is based on the prevalent political stagnation, which tolerates a good deal of pulpit and platform noise in consideration of actual domestic legislature in behalf of the democracy.

The sects are kept out of the public schools, and though they have made the greatest efforts to get the monopoly of the secondary education, and have succeeded to an extent unknown in any other colony, this is only half the battle in a community where "one man" has but "one vote," and a heavy percentage like to record their vote.

At any rate, on this point also our friend can (and does) still follow out his instincts, and more or less defy the "parsons."

It is, then, as the average colonial capitalist, or rather, to use a more accurate term, the average man of business, the immediate predecessor of Marcus Clarke's perfected type, that we are to see this man.

It is very much the same state of affairs as

was to be found in the United States in the forties and fifties.

Yet these editing managers, or managing editors, whichever they should be called, have surely somewhere in them some other mental or emotional force than mere desire for wealth and power.

Instinct and an utter want of scruple may lead them to pander to any hot fit or cold fit of their good public, and their inconsistencies and tergiversations will be as sudden and shameless as those of this good public of whose pleasure they are made, and whose displeasure they dare not face; but surely some genuine and disinterested sentiment of patriotism and social belief, of personal pride and purity, exists in them?

It does.

Australia is more and more justified of all her children.

Our friend goes to England to purchase the best—the very best—appliances for his newspaper, and you shall hear him say that Melbourne need not, on the whole, fear comparison as a city with any city in the world—and the same, of course, is to be said for the people as for the place.

Good man, what is the Louvre or the Uffizi to him ?

He remembers the local public picture galleries—not so big, perhaps, but the pictures quite as good, and many of them better. (For, between you and me, your “ Old Masters ” are—just rubbish.)

Nay, he will tell you, with the bland confidence of the conscious connoisseur, that Parisian cooking is much over-rated, and that he will give you a dinner at three or four local hotels quite as good as the Café Anglais or the Maison Dorée.

And so it veritably seems to him.

He takes his Australia very seriously.

There is no doubt about it.

And, at the hour of impact with those who do not, he rings true.

Absolutely Australian also are his social beliefs.

Give us trade-unions and the eight-hours day.

We don't want our workmen to be “ crawlers.”

Combination and organisation are their “ right,” &c., &c.

The personal pride and purity are also indisputable, though they are often "perfect Antipodean" in their expression.

But it is really an important fact (as we have noted) that legitimate profits have indeed allowed most of the large newspapers to remain politically unhampered.

Party leaders have no "organs" as they have in England, though the general support of this party or that is, of course, unescapable, but independence is jealously maintained in the right of a criticism distinctly "free and easy" in its character.

All this he will tell you with the most animated frankness, ending up with : " And we don't let our theatrical critics go into the theatres on the never-never " (" paper " is the English slang equivalent) ; " we pay for their places, *and then they can say just what they think about things !* "

Such, then, is the presiding influence of the average influential Australian newspaper—this is his fashion as he lived (and lives), and most assuredly he will have to be reckoned with.

For he sums up the outward and visible shape, if not the inward and spiritual grace,

of the Australian civilisation in its most striking and dominant aspects, more nearly than any single person can.

Of all the types I have taken, he is far away the most typical—the tall, coarse, strong-jawed, greedy, pushing, talented man, with his secularised religion and his commercialised democracy.

That is the “civilised Australian.”

If England can strike a bargain with him, even something not unlike Imperial Federation may, despite everything, yet become a fact.

V.

TWO AUSTRALIAN WRITERS.

NOTHING struck me more, in a long and varied residence in Australia, than the keenness of the popular instinct not only in things social or political but (shall I be believed?) in things literary.

I refer exclusively to the Australian manifestations of these ; for I need scarcely say that, beyond the exceedingly limited sphere of his personal experience, the average Australian is just as profoundly ignorant as the average Englishman, and perhaps he is even more so.

Few are less aware of this critical gift of his than the Anglo-Australian.

No reproach is more frequently in the mouth of the writers who supply the meagre literary comment of the local magazines and weekly newspapers than that of Australia's neglect of

her "men of letters," and especially of her poets.

Mr. Christie Murray, who has recently been speaking with candour and intelligence of what he saw and of what he thought he saw in his travels there, has accepted from them this judgment without question.

He tells us that the average Australian cares nothing for, and indeed knows nothing of, Kendall and Harpur and Stephens (Mr. Murray, by the by, is mistaken in his manner of spelling the name of this gentleman).

True, that a little later he ingenuously confutes himself by expatiating on the familiarity of even the roughest livers with the poetry of Adam Lindsey Gordon ; but to the Englishman, to whom these are most probably all *nomina et præterea nihil*, the case for the hopeless illiterateness of the average Australian seems made out.

It is not astonishing that, in the meridian hour of colonial expansion, when Englishmen lost their heads over the Contingent and the imaginary denizens of Mr. Froude's "Oceana," the Anglo-Australians followed suit.

The English public, or at least a very dis-

tinctly audible section of it, was eager to take seriously all things Australian.

The question was put: "Have not these wonderful Antipodeans, these 'blameless Æthiopians' of modern days, whose prosperity is so astonishing, whose loyalty to us is so gratifying, written anything?"

The opportunity was a golden one for the neglected scribes and their champions, and they seized on it with the utmost alacrity.

Never was such a flood of inferior verse foisted successfully on the open market by such inane and pretentious criticism.

A distinct case could have been made out for two Australian writers—one a poet and one a novelist—two writers who, sooner or later, will take the places to which they are justly entitled in the temple of English literature.

But they were both dead; had both attained a fixed position of popularity in their own land; and, finally, had both little or nothing of the special pseudo-literary qualities in vogue with the dominant cliques in the colonial capitals.

If the result of the effort to demonstrate the fact of "Australian Literature" to England had

been the proper recognition of the poetic work of Adam Lindsey Gordon and of the prose work of Marcus Clarke, something genuine and permanent would have been done.

But this was not what our Anglo-Australian friends desired.

The thing to do was to show that "Oceana," this wonderful "Oceana," had writers on a par with all its other wonders, and if in the doing of this a little personal notoriety could be won, why, so much the better.

The reaction against Gordon, which is still powerful in Anglo-Australian "cultivated circles," and (what I find much more regrettable) among the class of young educated Australians, the first generation of the high schools and universities, was then at its height.

Attention was fixed on a throng of mediocrities who could not bare any close or extended inspection, and now the opinion among intelligent Englishmen appears to be that nothing in any way of interest or importance has yet been written at the Antipodes.

I cannot better introduce the two Australian writers, of whose claims for consideration I have already spoken, than by quoting a por-

tion of what one of them wrote about the other.

Marcus Clarke survived Gordon by some thirteen years, living to write a preface to the first collected edition of his friend's poetry.

He begins it thus : " The poems of Gordon have an interest beyond the mere personal one which his friends attach to his name. Written, as they were, at odd times and leisure moments of a stirring and adventurous life, it is not to be wondered at if they are unequal or unfinished. The astonishment of those who knew the man, and can gauge the capacity of this city " (of Melbourne) " to foster poetic instinct is that such work was ever produced here at all."

What a feeling of almost personal gratitude rises in one when, after much reading of factitious and inflated rhodomontade, one suddenly lights on a little piece of clear and quiet writing like that !

But Clarke could do more than write clearly and quietly : he could at times heighten his composition with the subtle and magical effects of the true literary artist.

" A poem like ' L'Allegro,' " he says, " could never be written by an Australian. It is too

airy, too sweet, too freshly happy. The Australian mountain forests are funereal, secret, stern. Their solitude is desolation. They seem to stifle in their black gorges a story of sullen despair. No tender sentiment is nourished in their shade. In other lands the dying year is mourned, the falling leaves drop lightly on his bier. In the Australian forests no leaves fall. The savage winds shout among the rock-clefts. From the melancholy gums strips of white bark hang and rustle. The very animal life of these frowning hills is either grotesque or ghostly. Great grey kangaroos hop noiselessly over the coarse grass. Flights of white cockatoos stream out, shrieking like evil souls. The sun suddenly sinks, and the mopokes burst out into horrible peals of semi-human laughter. The natives aver that, when night comes, from out the bottomless depths of some lagoon the bunyip rises, and, in form like monstrous sea-calf, drags his loathsome length from out the ooze. From a corner of the silent forest rises a dismal chant, and around a fire dance natives painted like skeletons. All is fear-inspiring and gloomy. . . . As when among sylvan scenes, in places

‘Made green with the running of rivers,
And gracious with temperate airs,’

the soul is soothed and satisfied; so, placed before the frightful grandeur of these barren hills, it drinks in their sentiment of defiant ferocity and is steeped in bitterness. . . . Some see no beauty in our trees without shade, our flowers without perfume, our birds who cannot fly, or our beasts who have not yet learned to walk on all fours. But the dweller in the wilderness acknowledges the subtle charm of this fantastic land of monstrosities. He becomes familiar with the beauty of loneliness. Whispered to by the myriad tongues of the wilderness, he learns the language of the barren and the uncouth, and can read the hieroglyphics of haggard gum-trees, blown into odd shapes, distorted with fierce hot winds, or cramped with cold nights, when the Southern Cross freezes in a cloudless sky of icy blue. The phantasmagoria of that wild dreamland termed the bush interprets itself, and the poet of our desolation begins to comprehend why free Esau loved his heritage of desert sand better than all the bountiful richness of Egypt.”

Clarke's work as a writer covers a far broader range than is known to those who have only read his one sustained effort—his novel, "For the Term of his Natural Life."

True, there is not much which is important enough to bear transplantation to England, but there is a considerable body of it which is still of great value and use to Australians, and a slim volume of selections should also take its place here as a worthy supplement to his masterpiece.

To begin with, his work as a journalist is, together with the earlier portion of that of Mr. Brunton Stephens, the sole product, so far, of the Australian press which is of any use for young Australian journalists, and when one reflects that it is the journalists who stand almost entirely for the conscious culture of the whole Antipodean community, one realises the need there is for putting before them at least the best possible examples of what has been done by their predecessors.

There is nothing now being written in Australia that can compare with the series of newspaper articles which Clarke gave out, at different periods and in different places, under

the names of "The Peripatetic Philosopher" and "The Wicked World." Whenever he had the chance to do more serious work he took it, and some of his contributions to the local monthlies of the hour are still the pleasantest reading.

They stand quite alone.

Work like "Abel Jansen Tasman," which appeared in the fourth number of the *Melbourne Review*, is a model of its kind.

I can only hope the young writers of Australia will yet practically demonstrate some appreciation of the fact.

Clarke also did some short stories in the style of Edgar Allan Poe, and, at least, two of them, "The Dual Existence" and "The Golden Island," are worthy of a more permanent preservation.

Of his efforts at applying the predetermined pathos of Dickens to colonial subjects (such are his sketches, "Pretty Dick," "Bullock Town," and others), it is not possible to speak highly.

It seems sufficient to remember that Mr. O. W. Holmes says the first is "a *very* touching story, *very* well told"; but alas!

the fashions of this world change, and fewer tears are shed over the demise of Paul Dombey than in the days of our fathers, even as in their days young men and maidens had lost the knack of a convulsive sympathy with the trials and triumphs of the prudently chaste Pamela.

A discreet silence may also be maintained concerning his verse, though he never was so uncritical as for a moment to claim any actual inspiration for it, and he wrote two delicious parodies in the typical styles of his two friends, Gordon and Kendall, which must be counted to him for a certain sort of righteousness.

His reckless Bohemianism still furnishes endless, more or less disparaging and apocryphal anecdotes to the good Philistines of Melbourne; but the pathos of his life, the charm of his lighter work, and the power of his solitary novel, attract one to him with a deep personal interest and affection.

"Marcus Clarke," wrote to me one of the few, the very few, who during his lifetime recognised this aspect of him, "Marcus Clarke, with all his genius, his delightful ways, his

lovely face, hunted as you may say out of life as he was, so glad for the gift of death ! ”

One other touch, a few chance words from the meagre account of a witness of his acceptance of that gift, brings him vividly before us.

“ The large beautiful eyes, with a far-off gaze in them, opened widely for a second, and then closed.”

In his slight preface to Gordon's poems, he says with his true, if not habitual, critical acumen : “ The student of these unpretending volumes will be repaid for his labour. He will find in them something very like the beginnings of a national school of Australian poetry.”

A national school of Australian prose, even in the more restricted sense in which he meant us to take his own dubious phrase, is an eventuality obviously outside serious consideration ; but it is a fact that the only prose that has yet been written in Australia has been written by Marcus Clarke.

A better model could not, under the circumstances (at least so it seems to me), have been found, and if he is right in that prognostication of his that the Australians of the

future will be "a fretful, clever, perverse, irritable race," then it will some day be an interesting question as to how much of these very qualities was due in himself to innate temperament, and how much to the astonishingly rapid and complete adaptation of that temperament, at once so sensitive to its present and so oblivious of its past, to the *genius loci*.

In the case of Gordon the same question is to be asked already.

No one has yet rendered that genius, in its dual aspects of the coastal and bush life, in any degree approaching these two men.

Gordon goes deeper as becomes the poet, and he is the inspired spokesman of the actual effects of the Australian climate and manner of living in a sense only apprehended quite transiently by Clarke.

We shall find Clarke writing like this: "The lonely horseman between the moonlight and the day sees vast shadows creeping across the shelterless and silent plains, hears strange noises in the primeval forest, where flourishes a vegetation long dead in other lands, and feels, despite his fortune, that the trim utilitarian

civilisation which breeds him shrinks into insignificance beside the contemptuous grandeur of forests and ranges coeval with an age in which European scientists have cradled his own race."

It is (if I may use the expressive and colloquial idiom) alright, this, but it does not stand comparison for a moment with Gordon's verse as an interpretation of the Australian *chez lui*.

"What matters the sand, or the whitening chalk,
The blighted herbage, the black'ning log,
The crooked beak of the eagle-hawk,
Or the hot red tongue of the native dog?
That couch was rugged, those sextons rude :
Yet, in spite of a leaden shroud, we know
That the bravest and fairest are earth-worms' food,
When once they're gone where we all must go."

"He sometimes," says one who knew him, "compared the lot of a bushman with that of other states of mankind, saying that it was in many ways preferable to any one."

Such an idea assuredly never entered into the mind of Clarke.

He was essentially the child of civilisation and the city, that is to say, he could not long exist away from them ; but he had this exceedingly quick and sensitive nature of his, per-

petually gaining and losing the colours of every phase of life through which he passed ; and he had a delightful literary faculty which often enabled him, like King Midas, to turn all he touched into gold, or (to be more accurate) to turn a good deal into gold and a good deal more into tinsel.

In one of his short tales (" Pretty Dick ") he sat down, deliberately and of malice prepense, to make a special " study " of the bush scenery.

Unhappily he also made it a special " study " of the pseudo-pathos of Dickens.

The results were, as we have seen, terrible ; for Mr. O. W. Holmes praised them as highly as he knew how.

We reach to the limit of Clarke's aberrations when we get to " natural magic " like this : " It seemed to be a settled thing on the part of the sun to get up hotter and hotter every morning. He went down at night with a red face, as much as to say, ' take care, I shall be hotter than ever to-morrow. ' "

Or the " tears, idle tears " of this : " Pretty Dick liked to go into the station, because every one was so kind to him. Every one loved Pretty Dick ; even old Tom, who had been a

‘lag,’ and was a very wicked man, hushed the foul jest and savage oath when the curly head of Pretty Dick came within hearing; and the men always felt as if they had their Sunday clothes on in his presence.”

This is woeful, and there is more, much more of it, and some of it (if it be possible) woefuller still.

Yet Clarke in Sylvia in “His Natural Life”—Sylvia with her “thousand imperious prettinesses,” “her little figure as upright and supple as a willow rod,” “her innocent delicate face in its nimbus of fine gold hair,” “charmingly conscious of her own beauty,” “standing piteously near to the wounded Bates, but afraid to touch him”—where in our modern fiction is a more real, more delightfully real, portrait of a child than Sylvia?

The same startling contrast is to be found in his critical work.

Some of it is, as we have seen already, thoroughly sane and good.

Some of it is distinctly brilliant.

His essay on “The Future Australian Race” is as utterly alone in the domain of Australian social criticism, as his essay on “Abel Jansen

Tasman" is in the domain of prose literature.

It is the only thing yet written about the Australian civilisation which can be said to count at all.

Its audacity is afraid of nothing, and, if it meets with some grievous stumbles, they certainly do not arrest its headlong speed.

"It is more than likely that what should be the Australian Empire," he remarks with his jaunty air, "will be cut in half by a line drawn through the centre of the continent . . . All beneath this line will be a Republic, having the mean climate, and in consequence, the development of Greece. The intellectual capital of the Republic will be in Victoria; the fashionable and luxurious capital on the shore of Sydney Harbour."

His literary criticism has, as a whole, the same inequalities.

"The story does not end satisfactorily," he says of "*La Fausse Maîtresse*," through one of his characters which is said to bear a strong resemblance in some respects to himself, the unhappy North, in "*His Natural Life*," "Balzac was too great a master of his art for that.

In real life the curtain never falls on a comfortably finished drama. The play goes on eternally," and he justly praises that "profound philosopher, whose autopsy of the human heart awoke North's contemplation," for "that grim simplicity which (because it at once bears the stamp of truth, and forces the imagination of the reader to supply the omitted details of horror) is more effective to inspire sympathy than elaborate description."

Yet Clarke, in his fantastic mood, can tell us that he "does not propose to criticise [Disraeli's] 'Endymion' further here than by saying that it is quite as spiteful as 'Lothair,' and far more extravagant," which is one of the most moderate of the quite perverse and foolish diatribes which make up his final judgment on the author of those delightful novels.

It was a writer of this complex constitution who, feeling the ground slipping from under his feet, made one desperate effort to concentrate himself in a masterpiece, and who, when criticism has said its last words concerning obvious technical flaws and intellectual limitations, it must be admitted, in a measure succeeded.

I am not going to attempt here a detailed examination of "His Natural Life."

I am merely advancing Clarke's claims as an Australian writer to be taken seriously by his English audience, and, when I have filled out the picture of the man's work as a whole, and have reached the finest product of it, have little more to do than to praise it in general terms, and recommend readers to judge of it themselves for themselves.

Clarke's debt to Balzac is a large one, a far larger one than can appear to any one who has not studied the work of the Australian writer as a whole.

Clarke had enough of the infallible instinct of genius to see what was really wanting in him, if he was to attempt the achievement of anything satisfactory.

He never did anything concentrated and sustained before this book: he never did anything at all in the same style afterwards.

It is true that circumstances were unfavourable, but power of this calibre, if it is an organic part of a man, and not a mere phase of his development, cannot be suppressed by, at any rate, such toil and trouble as Clarke had to endure.

Rising from a course of Balzac, thoroughly imbued with the literary method of the man, he wrote the first draft of the story.

Then the influence passed, and he was left facing the unequal results of his work.

A certain classical sense (and what is the classical sense in all literature, art, and science but the sense of proportion, of outline?) saved him from Balzac's pedantry, if he was unable to fathom Balzac's profundity, and he applied not only the *limæ labor* to the book, but (what is so much more difficult still) set upon "loading all the rifts of his subject with ore," to the best of his ability.

In neither operation was he wholly successful.

That was not possible to him ; but he was successful enough to end with having produced one of the few remarkable English novels of his time—one of the few which have won for a man a place, however small, in the crowded fane of our literature.

Probably he knew it.

Let us hope so.

I like to think of him as one who, facing fate, the fatality of his own character no less than

that of his surroundings,—clenched his teeth and said to himself as the French poet did:—

“ O médiocrité, celui qui pour tout bien
T'apporte à ce tripot dégoûtant de la vie,
Est bien poltron au jeu s'il ne dit: 'Tout ou rien !' ”

And, having staked both bravely and skillfully, he won, and we should applaud his dexterity and courage.

This temper of the supreme gambler, which lifted Clarke, in his capacity of worker and artist, to his highest, was more or less habitual in his friend, but its results were unfortunately quite different.

Civilisation had but little real hold on Gordon.

A smattering of Horace, backed by promiscuous readings of the more popular poems of Browning, Tennyson, and Mr. Swinburne, constituted a sort of pseudo-intellectuality which was too pitiful an effort to retain what he conceived to be the *fine fleur* of culture to be called an affectation.

But in reality he was material absolutely made to the hand of the new conditions under which he found himself.

He had little of the true literary sense—less even than Byron.

His faults in the technique of his Art are severe.

His lyric capacity, too, is distinctly limited.

“I was often amused,” writes one who knew him well, “to hear him quote from the poets, and his recitations used to make me laugh outright. One day I said, ‘Hang it, Gordon, you can write good poetry, but you can’t read!’

“His only way of quoting or reciting was in ‘a sing-song.’”

Another friend escapes the difficulties of definition by merely calling it “odd,” saying that “his delivery was monotonous,” adding, however, that “his way of emphasising the beautiful portions of what he recited was charming from its earnestness.”

His own criticism on his verses was, “They don’t *ring* so badly after all, old fellow, do they?” Once he says himself:—

“My rhymes, are they stale? If my metre
Is varied, one chime rings through all;
One chime—though I sing more or sing less,
I have but one string to my lute.”

Not a line of blank verse is recorded of him,

and only one dubious poem wherein every final word in a line has not its rhyming fellow.

This want of fineness, of delicacy, is in everything he did.

He likes, with the ingenuous pride of a schoolboy, to parade his Latin.

Once or twice he writes rhymed Latin verse

Surely such a phrase as "Et tuquoque, pater meus," found the authority for the adjectival vocative in mere forgetfulness and the exigencies of the *ring* of the rhyme (just as Polyxena with a long *e* did) rather than in the Virgillian "sanguis meus."

"A more dare-devil rider," says his first friend again, "never crossed a horse. . . . As a steeplechase rider he was, of course, in the very first rank" (and steeplechasing in Australia, let me remark, is a very different thing to the milder form of that exercise practised in England), "and his name is indelibly associated with many of the most famous chases run in Victoria, although in my opinion, and I think in that of many good judges too, he was deficient in what is termed 'good hands,' and when it came to a finish was far behind a Mount or a Watson."

Just the same is to be said of his poetry.

But these are, after all, but trifles.

What a pathos, what an irresistible attraction there was in this shy, proud, tragic personality!—in everything he did, in everything he said, in everything he wrote.

Imagine that this dare-devil rider was almost blind—"painfully short-sighted."

"Intensely nervous," says Clarke, "and feeling much of that shame at the exercise of the higher intelligence which besets those who are known to be renowned in field sports, Gordon produced his poems shyly, scribbled them on scraps of paper and sent them anonymously to magazines."

Did ever physical and emotional characteristics more closely correspond with the mental and spiritual in a man?

"At times," says one of his friends, "Gordon was the strangest, most weird, mysterious man I ever saw, and I could not help feeling almost afraid of him; and yet there was a fascination about him which made me like to see him."

The same fascination gets hold of those who read his poetry.

He has the priceless gift of a genuine personality.

He is what Goethe calls demoniac.

I shall never forget the afternoon I spent in a pilgrimage to his grave outside Melbourne.

The tombstone, a block of bluestone with a shattered column crowned with a laurel wreath : everything wild, luxuriant, uncivilised : everywhere the heat and glow of the tropical midsummer tempered only by the furnace-wind from the interior deserts, blowing heavily with the scent of the sweet-briars, and over the rank grasses and golden broom.

Here they had buried him, sick for peace, surely in no unfitting place and manner.

"When I first heard the sad news," says his friend again, "I was not the least surprised. I really expected that what did happen would happen."

Shattered in body and spirit, this man, the darling of an unborn race, bringing to the youngest of nations all the *Weltschmerz* of the oldest, perished at thirty-seven, an inept failure on a hundred lines, a failure so splendid as to be a success on one or two—unrecognised,

solitary, unconsolated by any knowledge of the future that awaited him.

If this is not a tragic fate, then no fate is tragic.

It is now more than twenty years since he died, and he has become something very like the heart and soul of the Australian people.

His faults, his limitations escape them, in much the same way as the limitations and faults of Burns escaped the democracy of Scotland.

Just as Burns's vilest writing—his inflated, pompous imitations of Dryden and Pope; the tiresome rhodomontade of prose like his derisive love-letters to Mrs. M'Lehose (the Sylvander to Clarinda business)—still seems to simple Scotchmen a triumphant proof of their poet-ploughman's ability to excel in the worldly "grand style," so work like Gordon's appalling imitative parody of "Faust" ("Ashtaroth" it is called), together with his stale Latin quotations, bad Latin, worse French, and all the rest of it, seem to the simple Australians the culminating marvel in their poet.

But, once more, what does it matter?

They are right in the main, far more right,

in any case, than the colonial quidnuncs who pester us with their tenth-rate versifiers.

For he is the only Australian poet who counts: he is unique and (let me add) he is modern, passably modern, though he was far from aware of it himself.

What I find so remarkable in all this is the fact that such a poet should have won such a place in the heart and mind of any people.

For it is Gordon's ideas, no less than Gordon's mere power of describing all forms of sport and violent action, which hold the true Australians, the younger generation of the democracy.

No such intellectual spectacle exists anywhere else.

His black pessimism, the pessimism of temperament reinforced by reason; his sheer pagan stoicism, proud and contemptuous of all the comforting and consoling religious drugs of the hour; his sombre passion for the truth, however hard, however cruel—what material do such qualities provide for the moulding of a nation?

He, it is true, is still touched with doubts and dim hopes concerning these comforts and con-

solutions, but he feels this is weakness and should be cast off, and his young disciples feel that they have cast it off because they have never really known it.

The ideal, observe, is embodied in "the fever, the fulness of animal life," which, however, is to mean not only "the allotted work, the deed to do, the death to die," but also the hatred of wrongs and the tenderness for the sufferers in this hell of life.

Look you, all the Law and the Prophets, and the Gospels and the Epistles too, are there without the alloy of false and superstitious knowledge.

To us moderns what makes our "burdens" so "heavy" is that our "natures" are so "weak." This world is a

"world of rapine and wrong,
Where the weak and the timid seem lawful prey
For the resolute and the strong."

What, then, shall we do to be saved? Never mind being saved!—

"Question not, but live and labour
Till yon goal be won,
Helping every feeble neighbour,
Seeking help from none,

Life is mostly froth and bubble,
 Two things stand like stone—
 KINDNESS in another's trouble,
 COURAGE in your own."

("Yon goal" is a symbol of death, of course.)
 Yet he shirks none of the complicating clauses.
 He faces everything—disillusionment, disgust, despair.

"Oh ! wind that whistles over thorns and thistles
 Of this fruitful earth like a goblin elf ;
 Why should he labour to help his neighbour
 Who feels too reckless to help himself?"

And then the more spiritual note, but how much sadder and more despairing :—

"The restless throbbings and burnings
 That hope unsatisfied brings,
 The weary longings and yearnings
 For the mystical better things,
 Are the sand in which is reflected
 The pitiless moving lake
 Where the wanderer falls dejected
 By a thirst he never can slake."

No one has sung our modern woe more healthily than Gordon.

He has not the poignancy or the delicate grace of Musset, the ghastly cruelty and intensity of Baudelaire.

Leopardi has a supreme culture and intelligence utterly beyond him.

Heine, with his exquisite lyric and artistic gift, and all the talents of civilisation; Arnold, with his Grecian elegiac nobility; even the embryonic Clough has gifts unknown to our rough-riding, dare-devil Australian.

But in all of these men there is something sickly and ineffectual which too often impairs their force, and renders their influence too much like that of a heated room and too little like that of the open air.

We have to go to Byron to get the same "keen sense for natural beauty," allied with "a manly admiration for healthy living," that we find in Gordon.

Half of the secret of his influence on the Antipodeans lies there.

The other half lies surely in the absolute interpretation which they find in him of the philosophy of their land.

Wearilessly does he preach his gospel of courage, and in every note.

"Mere pluck," he says—

"though not in the least sublime,
Is wiser than blank dismay."

The death he envies is that of the riders in the Balaclava charge, who perished (in small capitals also), "not in vain, as a type of our chivalry."

He forgives everything to Burke (the explorer who perished after crossing Australia), bungling, swagger, ill-temper, the ruin of the expedition, and the death of his comrades, because he himself "died game," lying above ground, pistol in hand.

"'Twas well ; he toil'd till his task was done,
Constant and calm in his latest throe ;
The storm was weather'd, the battle won,
When he went, my friends, where we all must go.

God grant that whenever, soon or late,
Our course is run and our goal is reach'd,
We may meet our fate as steady and straight
As he whose bones in yon desert bleach'd ;
No tears are needed—our cheeks are dry ;
We have none to waste upon living woe ;
Shall we sigh for one who has ceased to sigh,
Having gone, my friends, where we all must go ?

We tarry yet, we are toiling still ;
He is gone ; he fares the best ;
He fought against odds, he struggled up-hill,
He has fairly earned his season of rest ;
No tears are needed, fill up the wine ;
Let the goblets clash and the grape-juice flow.
Ho ! pledge me a death-drink, comrade mine,
To a brave man gone where we all must go !"

Nearly all his poems are short, and the one effort he made to win his way into the region of the larger Art was an abject failure.

I again refer to "Ashtaroth."

But in at least two of his more lengthy and sustained narrative poems he was successful.

One of them, indeed, "The Rhyme of Joyous Garde," is magnificent.

It is the one great poem yet written in Australia.

In earlier days of an enthusiastic first acquaintanceship, I committed myself, I remember, to the opinion that it was worth all the "Idylls of the King" put together.

I would not put it quite in that way now ; but it seems to me that, taken with Mr. William Morris's "Defence of Guinevere," the "Rhyme of Joyous Garde" is assuredly the one product of flesh and blood which has proceeded from the attempt to utilise the Arthurian legend in modern poetry.

Gordon's Lancelot has even less historical actuality than Lord Tennyson's, but he is a splendid and puissant personality, a real and glorious creation, as utterly human as heroic.

Singularly enough, also, considering the woe-

ful chances in his larger dramatic lyric, Gordon has given us two short extracts from "Unpublished Dramatic Lyrics," both of which are excellent in their way, despite some confusion and a rather reckless indulgence in Latin and French already alluded to.

But in neither of these, good as is the characterisation, does he reach to the astonishing height of his portrayal of Lancelot.

The whole heart and soul and mind of the great generous, noble, simple, superstitious soldier is there—remorseful for his treachery, yet unable to wish it undone, repentant for his sin, yet counting hell torment cheap for that first ecstatic kiss of possession.

All the alternations of all the influences of his life—nothing is forgotten.

Extracts from the poem cannot be quoted.

It should be quoted entire or not at all; for it is all woven together in one inextricable web and woof, forty verses that make a perfect whole, and an achievement as superb as it is unique.

I have lamented that Gordon did not, as a worker and artist, stake his all on one single poem, and achieve a masterpiece.

Perhaps my lament was needless.

Perhaps he knew that in the "Rhyme" he had indeed done this.

Certainly it is free, or almost free, from all his technical faults.

None of his characteristic weaknesses appear, his slovenliness of thought or phrase, his lapses into inferiority or even vulgarity, his failure to render the impression of an organic whole.

No record exists, so far as I am aware, of his opinion that this was, beyond all question, his best—his one perfect piece of work.

But, utterly as he was in the dark about himself, far removed as he was from either any comprehensive culture, or any innate faculty for criticism, which might have made this clear to him, it is yet possible that he realised that he had here at last written what none else could have written, and that so long as any genuine appreciation of poetry existed with those who spoke his tongue, his name would be remembered if by this alone.

Alas, once more it is only hope which we can entertain of such an idea.

Imbeciles everywhere face death confident in their literary immortality.

The late Mr. Martin Tupper declared that "he should not die ; with Ennius and David he should not die but live."

Harpur, of whom something has been said here, nourished a similar delusion, and doubtless there are other contemporary Australian versifiers who will have a future with Harpur and Tupper, if not with Ennius and David.

But Gordon ?

Had he no consolations whatever—slight though even such consolations as a limited perpetuity may grant to the world-weary children of men ?

As he went out that quiet and sunny morning, silent and alone with his rifle in his hand, resolved to play his final stake for everlasting peace, did no dream pass before him of the hundreds of brave and beautiful boys and girls, of noble and accomplished women and men, who should admire and love him with a whole-hearted passion ?

Was there nothing before him but the hateful hideousness of life and the deep-drugged oblivion of death ?

It was a superb destiny which awaited him, if he had only known it, and it was as a con-

queror, not as a desperate doom-driven failure,
that this man should have come forth to

“ Look around, and choose his ground,
And take his rest ! ”

PART II.

THE EASTERN INTERIOR.

I.

UP COUNTRY.

A THOUSAND minor particulars of fauna and flora clear to the eye of the naturalist do not impair the great fact of the extraordinary general resemblance of the whole Interior of Australia.

And the action of man has tended, and is ever tending, more and more to accentuate this resemblance.

Pastoralism, beginning with cattle and continuing with sheep, the rabbit following swiftly in their train from south to north, has, thanks to reckless overstocking and a system of tree-destruction equally reckless, pressed a pitiless stamp of desolation on to the face of the whole land.

The natural grasses, with all their wonders of luxuriance and lovely flowering, have had

whole genera destroyed—eaten out at the roots by the famishing animals.

Only clumps of the wiriest herbage—tussocks, as they are called, something like the tufts of razor-like keenness of edge which grow on English sand-dunes, shrivelled and blasted with the brine—survive into the severe seasons.

Nothing more mournful than the great plains, treeless and grassless, that are to be found all over Australia.

The pallid sky without a cloud oppresses you with its intolerable burthen, and your eyes ache with looking towards the viewless horizon smoking like a cauldron.

Often there is no sign of life whatever.

Man has exterminated the kangaroo and the emu, and even the dingo, as much with overstocking as with lead and strychnine.

The roads called “lanes” are little more than brown, bare, rectilineal passages, whose sole ornaments are, perchance, the telegraph poles and wires running exactly down the middle; while the skeletons and carcasses of sheep or of some poor patient bullock who has done something more than his duty, are its only landmarks.

The everlasting wire fences hem you in on either side.

By night it is different.

The sun has dropped suddenly behind the horizon line, and the stealthy evening glides up swiftly into the bronze that follows on the brilliant jewelled gold and red of the afterglow.

The stars come out, marshalling their array more and more thickly.

The unutterable weirdness of the Australian scrub after dark falls upon you in its full force.

The strange sounds of the nocturnal desert, the inexplicable breathings and rustlings, the pursuits and captures of the unknown spirits of earth and air, the fantastic figures of crouching attentive animals—here is all the sacred horror of the old Hebrew prophets.

Was not the aching monotony of the daytime better than this ?

Now and then the light showed you the brown grass-lark pursued by her foe, the big, brown, ineffectual-flapping hawk, or a stray hare crossed your path, or a quail whizzed away from your approach, or you lit upon a “mob” of the wild, timid, yet inquisitive “monkeys” (sheep).

At night the ground-wind becomes an unknown monster and raises its head towards the crowding stars.

The carcases and skeletons seem agitated with a fitful breath of being.

The dry bones do not veritably live, but they seem once more to feel the electric currents of life thrilling through and through them.

Within the memory of many these plains waved with grass so high that a horseman was soon hid in them.

In those days squatters sheared a hundred thousand sheep where to-day they shear much less than half as many.

"Shepherds" tended their flocks by night as they did in Syria and Mesopotamia of old, and guided their wanderings by sun and star, as the nomadic shearers at times do still.

There was life and living in these plains before the wire fence came and shut the sheep up in gigantic lidless boxes, where they became wild animals, only disturbed once or twice a year by dogs and men driving them into the "yards" in a fog of dust.

But there are other and some of them more cheerful aspects of the Interior than this.

Seasons of drought are followed by seasons of flood.

Sometimes even the land is blessed with mild and continuous rain.

Then, in the better localities, a few days will see an astonishing transformation.

First a thin and vivid green, like the breaking of the buds on the twigs after the first warm showers of the English spring, lights up the earth ; then the grass comes darker-hued and more dense, and last of all it bends and waves in beautiful luxuriance.

All sorts of flowers burst into bloom, and in the spring the plains will be carpeted with vast undulating sheets of blue.

The terrors of the drought become like the fading memory of a bitter dream.

But except in those singular years, which mark the culmination of the rain-cycle, where scarcely a day will pass without showers, the clear, dry breath of the desiccator is ever at hand.

Large portions of this Eastern Interior are, it has been remarked, at a high altitude—level downs stretching away back for hundreds of miles from the central portion of the Great

Range which runs without a break from the foot of the northern peninsula to the extreme south, where it turns westward across Victoria.

The west wind, blowing over these from the heart of the land, is to the Australian what the east wind is to the Englishman.

The sun is always warm, but the moment he has fallen behind the earth the temperature drops with a run, and a night ride across the plains in a westerly winter gale would daunt a Canadian.

But the winter is short—too short in the northern half, where it does not allow the European time to recover from the ardours of the summer.

In the great bulk of this land it is not really fit to speak of seasons, such as spring, and summer, and autumn, and winter.

There are but two—the hot season and the cold season.

A third might be added in the shape of the wet season—whenever it comes.

Sometimes years pass without it.

Sometimes it will last for months.

One reads a good deal nowadays of the discovery of a fertile Interior, and the sufferings

of the early explorers are relegated to a convenient oblivion.

The cruel picture they drew is said to be a partial one, and irrigation is to transform the face of even the salt-bush deserts.

The conservation of water may do much in the more eastern half which participates in the coastal rainfall, and artesian springs may do something in the further west, but the day is far removed when the stubborn hostility of nature in her most dreaded aspect will be worth overcoming, even if it may possibly be overcome.

Nothing, however, is more wonderful than the power of recuperation innate in all the forms of the vegetation, and, indeed, of life generally.

Everything seems to only ask for the slightest excuse to increase and multiply to profusion.

Nowhere is the heartless wastefulness of nature more overwhelming.

A few warm showers in the forefront of midsummer's drought fill the water-holes, clothe the plains, and hurry fish, flesh, and fowl into teeming existence.

In three days the bitter agony of fevered death is upon them.

To-day Australia may flow with milk and honey ; to-morrow she may flow with vinegar and gall.

It will be many a long and weary decade before the leopard changes her spots and the Ethiop his skin, and this singular Interior its extravagant alternations, its barren fecundity, its sinister charm.

II.

THE SQUATTERS.

ONE has a natural hesitation in disappointing people.

I know so well the sort of picture that is "expected " of me here, not only by the ordinary Englishman, but also by the ordinary town and coastal Australian.

The men of the Interior are sardonic over the conception of themselves and their life held by the good folk in the capitals.

Considering the still semi-nomadic character of a large portion of the people, the "bogey " notions held by one section of it in regard to the others exceed all reasonableness.

The ignorance of Victorians concerning the facts of daily existence in Queensland is often only one shade less than that of full-blown British "new chums."

But the gulf between colony and colony is small and traversable compared to that great fixture that lies between the people of the Slope and of the Interior.

Where the marine rainfall flags out and is lost, a new climate, and, in a certain sense, a new race begin to unfold themselves.

The "fancy" stations on this side of the Great Dividing Range produce something just different enough from anything in England to make the Englishman accept the *dictum* of the Australian cockney that this is at last the typical example of "the bush life."

People in the country districts of Illinois and Kentucky doubtless talk in the same way of "the West."

But they are mistaken.

It is not one hundred, but three and four and five hundred miles that you must go back from the sea if you would find yourself face to face with the one powerful and unique national type yet produced in the new land.

Here you will find that the pastoral industry on the old lines is playing out more and more.

The greed of man has overreached itself.

Just as the sugar plantations of the northern

Queensland coast have been ruined by men in haste to be rich, so have the most fertile plains—plains like those of the Darling Downs, for example, rich in black and chocolate soil of alluvial and mud-volcanic deposit—been turned into deserts.

These sheep, lying dead everywhere, with agonised, back-cast heads, have not perished from thirst.

In every paddock the windmills, that look afar off like eastern watch-towers, pump up the water from the sunken wells into troughs; but what avails water to poor brutes nourished on the wiry tussock grass, which gathers into balls in their stomachs, and kills them with hunger and constipation?

Not only has overstocking destroyed the natural grasses, but the moment the rain brings back the green, it is devoured off the face of the earth.

The exhausted herbage can do no more.

Here in the “back blocks,” then, you will begin by discovering that the squatter *quâ* squatter is being gently transformed off the face of the earth.

The old reckless overstocking, coupled with

the old reckless expenditure, and backed up by the droughts, have ruined him.

Mortgage upon mortgage have made him the slave of the big pastoral syndicates or of the banks.

Often the banks and the syndicates are one.

They have put their heavy hand on to him : if he was worth retaining as the manager of his one-time station, retained him : if he was not, thrust him out, and substituted a man of their own.

All the old profuse hospitality, the hunts and dances and four-in-hands of the squatter "kings," live now but as a dim tradition.

The country townships they created in the centre of a circle of their colossal "runs" eke out a miserable existence with the meagre patronage of the selectors.

The manager has his supplies sent up to him direct from Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, and enjoys little popularity with township hotel and storekeepers who often find in him a dangerous competitor, for on the slightest provocation he opens station "stores" of his own.

Some of the squatters have had the wit to

become metropolitan capitalists, chairmen of companies, members of the Assembly, or of the Legislative Council of their colony, and they "run up," from time to time, to the stations to see how things are going.

But, as a rule, their lines have fallen in less pleasant places, and they ride and drive as mere agents round what were once their own sheep-runs with clouded faces, morose and surly, or have taken "Government billets" down in the capitals, and are embittered husbands and fathers.

Sadder still is the life of their womenfolk.

What little there is in the "bush" of cultivation and refinement is due to the women, and that comes to mean to the wives and daughters of the squatters and now of the managers.

The flower-gardens, which give to the small oases of civilisation, the whitewashed, iron-roofed station-houses, their one most charming feature, most often owe their creation and continued existence to the labours of "the girls."

They, too, in their desire for fruit (Did the ancient Hebrew myth place on record a deep sexual trait in the craving of Eve for the apples

that were "pleasant to the eye and good for food" ?), are frequently the cause that the grape, the peach, the quince, the banana soften and ameliorate the everlasting diet of mutton and bread and tea and tinned condiments. Their hesitating dips into literature, based on a passionate attachment to Adam Lindsey Gordon, their spirited but trying efforts on the cast-iron pianos of their clime, constitute the sole disinterested element in a life that reeks with sheep and horses and dogs, or dogs and horses and cattle, from early-rising, rosy-fingered dawn to dewless eve.

The heathenism of the bush is intense.

Every one is at heart a pessimist.

The horrible condition of the coatings of stomachs perpetually drenched with tannin (speciously termed "tea") doubtless counts for something in the action and reaction of body and climate, climate and body.

After a good spell of drought, endured on a diet of mutton, bread, jam, and stewed Bohea, one's indifference to life becomes all but complete.

There is nothing wild or hysterical about it.

It is merely a profound and passionless heedlessness of danger and death.

In certain natures it becomes combative, and the drawling "blow" (Anglicè, boasting) of the competitive bushman borders on an anger which is so high-strung as to threaten insanity.

The bulk of the squatters yesterday, the bulk of the managers to-day, have risen from the selector class, and are, as a rule, pretty well in touch with those they control.

Educated at primary schools where the teaching was secular, deprived, together with all our worthless accretions of dogma, of the poetry of the life of the East, which is the one real boon of the Bible story, the sole appeal to the spiritual side in most of them has been made by the lyrics of their sombre poet. Their doctrine is simple. Life being mostly a curse, it is no good pretending it is anything else. But it is only the coward who whines; and we mustn't be cowards; that is one step lower than the animals. Sing out your song, then, like a bird, though the death-hawk is over your poised head!

Bushmen will almost always assert that the happiest hours of their life have been moments

of peril—a wild ride through the scrub after “brumbies” (wild-horse), “rounding-up” a refractory steer, swimming a swollen creek that runs a banker, a “row” with rival drovers in some wayside “pub.”

Most, however, feel to a certain extent the poetry of milder natural delights, and here again they find their mouthpiece in Gordon—the tinkling of the hobbled horses at night as two or three lie round the fire in the champagne airs of the more fertile “apple-tree” country (the “apple-tree” is merely a more umbrageous sample of the eternal gum), the moon rising huge and solemn from the brown brooding horizon of the treeless plains, the magic hour of the jewel-hued afterglow, the gold and blue of cloudless breezy spring mornings, the lights of the little township twinkling through the evening trees to the weary riders who have not seen a sign of human life for days, the winding track through the shadowy cyclopean cathedral aisles of the bunya and wild-fig forest, with the tropic sky a thin blue thread three hundred feet above; the labyrinthine gullies with their rain-purged ridges and sides thick with ferns and flowers.

All these enter dumbly into the dumb soul of the solitary bushman and add strange impulses, shy, beautiful, lyric, to his parched and materialised soul.

As he rises to more responsible positions, overcomes his cynical distrust of marriage and parentage, and develops into a small squatter, or a manager, the cark and care of his work shrivel him up.

The slow, pitiless, everlasting horror of a drought means ten years added to the life of the squatter or manager.

Pastoralism can now only be made to pay on a vast scale, but the chances of failure on a vast scale keep steadily greater than those of success, and he has (if he is the latter) to bear in addition all the unreasonable querulousness and ignorant blame, all the hot fits and cold fits of elation and panic that periodically afflict the capitalistic "bosses" in town.

In good seasons he has spasmodic outbreaks of pleasantness again, and Christmas may then find him in the local metropolis with his womenfolk for a holiday, giving the girls "a chance to get married."

Matrimony is not generally held as a holy

estate in the bush, nor are marriages made there with much readiness.

The sexes meet from early youth (when they sit side by side at school together) on a platform of something very like equality, and their relations are frank and unconstrained, with the inevitable human results of good, bad, and indifferent.

The young Australian man is wanting, to a large extent, in the egregious impudence of his English fellow, who, a loose, not to say a gross, liver himself, demands the immaculate in his womankind.

Australian conjugal loyalty and affection spring, rather, from the same point for both parties, and are continued to the same point.

The Australian girl will not sink her individuality in that of her husband, and tolerate neglect and even outrage under the rococo plea of fulfilling a divinely-ordained "duty."

The domestic tyrant, therefore, husband and father, wears no aureole round his hat as in this country, but figures simply as the selfish wretch he is, and runs a fair chance of seeing his spouse "skip" with somebody else, while his

friends and neighbours opine that "she did quite right."

The means of subsistence for young couples of the richer class are scanty in the bush, and doubtless this too has its influence in reducing the number of marriages ; but the fact remains that for both bush "boy" and bush "girl" the matrimonial market lies in the cities.

Some vague craving for more culture than they themselves possess, some masculine desire for a superior feminine refinement, some feminine wish for more extended masculine "ideas," make them seek out wives or husbands in other sisters and brothers than those of their neighbours.

But the bushman and bushwoman are never long happy anywhere else than among their rustling gum-trees ; and the savage avidity for "money and honey" which devours the coastal townspeople soon bewilders, wearies, and disgusts them.

Grievous as are often the afflictions of Droughtland, they do not leave the heart so empty as the insane clatter of the fœtid and dusty streets, the grimacing drawing-rooms, the spiteful, scandal-mongering haunts of an unwholesome privacy.

Nature, even in her most sinister aspect, has her divine consolations, and in the bush there are hours when her benignity soothes like the tender caress of a lover.

Frankly, I find not only all that is genuinely characteristic in Australia and the Australians springing from this heart of the land, but also all that is noblest, kindest, and best.

There are cruel features in the life—there are horrible features in it; but even in these there is an intensity, a directness, and a reality, which lift them, in my opinion, right above the eternally hideous and hypocritical vice of all the phases of our so-called “Civilisation.”

III.

THE SELECTORS.

WHATEVER success democratic legislation may have had in the coastal districts in forming what used to be called in England a yeoman class, it has failed utterly to do so in the Interior.

The reasons for this have already been indicated.

Pastoralism in Droughtland (let me repeat once more) can only be made to pay when undertaken on an enormous scale.

The clamour of the *tenuiores* has resulted in land bills that have thrown open to selection at almost nominal rents the pick of the squatters' leaseholds.

In Queensland the '84 Land Act permitted selections of one hundred and sixty acres.

The permission was useless.

Scarcely any one cared to profit by it.

I remember going to pay a visit to a friend of mine who had taken up one of these selections under the Range close to Too-woomba.

There is no richer land in Queensland or Australia.

The soil is several feet deep in vegetable mould.

The sudden rise of the great tableland precipitates the coastal rains.

He was within a few miles of a railway station, and he enjoyed "permanent water."

He considered himself singularly lucky.

I went with him to look at the "permanent water."

The dry bed of a torrent which had not run for years led us to two deep holes half filled with a turbid liquid, the support of a not inconsiderable quantity of the lower animal and vegetable life.

This we contemplated with that satisfaction known only to the bushman, to whom "anything that trickles" stands for water of the most delectable.

At the same time it was obvious that a

selection of one hundred and sixty acres, even under these comparatively favourable circumstances, could have no very extensive pecuniary future.

I must do my friend the justice to say that he was well aware of this, labouring under no wilfully or stupidly myoptic illusions on the subject, like the bulk of his neighbours.

His dreams were of an artesian water supply and orange orchards, and likely enough these dreams in his special case may come true.

But for those others ? but for the bulk of his neighbours ?

And how much—how infinitely much more for the selectors of Droughtland ?

One almost hesitates to draw the picture of their life.

Where goes all the Radical's profound satisfaction in the 4,000,000 peasant proprietors of France when he comes to observe the "small cultivators" with his own eyes ?

The most atrocious thing about the atrocious novel in which M. Emile Zola describes it all, is that it is true.

Everywhere in the Australian towns the good superficial people are calling for the

settlement of the Interior by a yeoman class.

Is there a globe-trotting Englishman who does not leave the country with the impression that nothing but human imbecility is keeping the towns overcrowded and the country a desert?

Of late the cry has been modified somewhat, and we are told that "a little capital" is required.

Twenty or thirty or forty years ago this was true ; to-day it is false.

It is not a few hundreds that should give a man of intelligence, patience, and economy the chance of earning a decent livelihood within a reasonable period, and bringing up a family on the same level as himself.

Nay, it is scarcely a few thousands.

The truth is that in Australia the money has been made.

On the outskirts it is still to make perhaps, and gold-fields may be discovered any day, though the south-east has so far alone given the Midas chances of the alluvial to the average worker.

When it is a case of quartz-crushing and

elaborate machinery, the average worker comes off but indifferently.

Mount Morgan and its millions have enriched a little local clique of lawyers, butchers, and the like. The men who have done the actual hard work have been "run" at the current wages, and have gone their ways unrejoicing.

In the settled industries all gains are being driven down rapidly to the life-line.

The average selector finds it possible nowadays to gain little more than a mere living by the exercise of unremitting and monotonous toil.

The much-deplored existence of the petty English farmer seems to me the more preferable of the two.

Both have enough to eat and to be clothed with, and that is about all; but the Englishman's is the better food (the hot, dry Australian climate equalises the other item), the superior comfort, the greater social pleasure.

He is not afflicted with that dreadful isolation which makes of so many selectors' homes intensified, if more vulgarised and depraved samples of the life drawn with a pen of fire in "Wuthering Heights."

It seems necessary to repeat that a view of the selectors of north-eastern Victoria, or of the best coastal patches of New South Wales or Queensland (including the small sugar plantations) gives but an anticipatory idea of the selectors of the real Interior.

On these the hand of inevitable social degradation lies heavily.

The best of them are being driven into the shearing class, the class below them, at first in the semi-independent shape of "cockies," "supplementing" their income as petty proprietors by wage-work, but compelled more and more to find that the "supplementation" lies in the foundering homestead.

The worst dip into wilder trades and risk the gaol.

The railway and the telegraph have ruined the big sheep and cattle-thief, as well as the bush-ranger, and the gains of the rings are generally meagre indeed when compared with the risk.

I have spoken of the cruel and indeed horrible aspects of the life of the Interior.

Most of the features are found concentrated in this unhappy class.

Of cultivation and refinement, so feeble and

jejune a growth in the richer and better-educated folk, there is in them no trace whatever.

Their present state of transition isolates them from even that mental exercise which the new ideas of union-combinations and of Socialism are making into a vital and regenerating force in the class below them.

In their attempt after the position of aristocrats of labour, occasional employers who are above the professional manual workers, they naturally find themselves suspected and often hated to the top of their bent.

Then there is the bitter sense of the ever-growing emptiness of their pretensions, this desperate struggle to maintain the homestead in the face of pitiless mortgages, and the inevitable collapse and fall exultantly awaited by those on whom they have tried to impose themselves.

They combat the unions with a savage malignancy, only joining them under compulsion, and ready to throw themselves in with their hereditary enemies, the squatters, rather than admit the equality of the new democracy.

The life of their womenfolk is pitiable.

To the cynical materialism of the current "bush" view of the relations of the sexes has been added the acrimony of disappointment, disgust, and despair, and if this has not already produced a hard, defiant, and shamelessly immoral type, then it speaks well for the happy, pure, and affectionate nature of the average Australian woman.

And if by type is meant dominant type, then this is certainly still the case.

The manager of a station, smarting at the moment under a 25 per cent. reduction of his wages, told me that even a 50 per cent. reduction would not drive him to take up a selection.

As he was, he enjoyed all the comforts and some of the luxuries of life (he meant of bush life), and his wages were always so much to the good.

Were he a selector he would enjoy neither the luxuries nor the comforts, and would soon find his land under the thumb of the bank, and himself under the thumb of the local store-keepers.

At the same time he realised how inadequately he was paid for the work he did, and how ruthlessly his interests were sacrificed by

his employers, who, to gain their accustomed percentage of profit, struck £100 a year off his wages at a blow rather than face any disagreeableness with the unions.

There is something in many of the smaller homesteads, and in the manner of life pursued there, that reminds one irresistibly of the "distressful country."

There is the same horrible bareness, the same terrible "ramshackliness," all the more apparent from the desiccations of the climate.

Perhaps a parallel in every way more satisfactory could be found between these Australian "selectors" of the Interior and the "mean whites" of the Southern States of America.

People are beginning to talk now of the possibilities of "civil war" between capital and labour, and some such eventuality might be possible where capital had a sufficient rank and file to draw from.

The "mean whites" supplied that rank and file to Jefferson Davis and Lee, and another ten or twelve years may give the capitalistic squatters of Australia an organised body of selectors intensely hostile to the unionists.

Such an eventuality would arrest the extinc-

tion of the class, though only for a time ; for the ultimate triumph of the capitalists could only mean the conquest in their turn of their now useless allies, and selectors and shearers would then pullulate together in a common impotency of degradation.

Land laws can never succeed in averting the imminent destiny of up-country pastoralism.

There is no room for a class of pastoral *tenuiores*.

There is no room for any class intermediate between the large wool-growers and the shearers.

The fruit selector is equally impossible as a permanency.

The pioneers have done, and are doing, well, but that is because capital has not yet turned its attention to the industry.

When it does, then the selectors will begin to find that production on a small scale once more reads want of profits, debt, and final absorption in the big "farms."

The trend of things is relentlessly towards huge monopolies of capital and labour, and these petty intermediate classes, striving to combine a little of both, are foredoomed to failure and ultimate extinction.

IV.

THE BUSH PEOPLE.

WE have now come to the main body, which contains also the *fons et origo*, of the New Race.

The one powerful and unique national type yet produced in Australia is, I have asserted, that of the Bushman.

The smaller resident or squatter or manager almost always shows signs of him : sometimes is merely a slightly refined or outwardly polished form of him.

The selector comes nearer to him still, so near as often to seem almost identic, yet a fine but unmistakable shade of difference severs him from the true Bushman, the Bushman pure and simple, the man of the nation.

It is, then, in the ranks of the shearers, boundary riders, and general station hands,

that the perfected sample must be sought, and it is the rapid thoroughness of the new social system, whose leading characteristics we have been considering, which has chiefly "differentiated" him already into this new species.

The Anglo-Australian has perished or is absorbed in the Interiors much more rapidly than on the sea-slope and in the towns.

Wire fences, we have seen, put an end to the old style of nomadic pastoralism with its shepherds, abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night, and with the Anglo-Australian shepherd disappeared one of the most striking identities of "the old colonial school."

We still find strange people in the bush, pariahs of civilisation, men who have fallen from their place of pride in every conceivable manner, but they are rare to what they used to be.

The marvellous *olla podrida* tide of the alluvial mining years left a large quantity of such flotsam and jetsam drifting aimlessly about on the barren shore of lagoons, or stranded high and dry in some wretched coign of vantage, rotting slowly away into oblivion.

Most districts still have their "loony," a qualified madman, but he is up to the neck, nay, to the very nostrils, in the up-country life, and dying he has no memory of the sweet Argos of his youth.

In "the old colonial days" the victims of the social system were a comparatively small percentage.

Payment for manual work was something more than high, and the money was scattered about by the unaccustomed Anglo-Australian wage-earner with an insane recklessness.

The legend of the "knocking down" of cheques is still current, but the actual thing is becoming rarer and rarer.

The social pressure has made such freaks of individualism unpopular, and besides, the native-born Australian does not care for drink.

Those who paint the shearer as a woe-begone "swagsman" or "sundowner," crawling up to the shed with his "mate" after the dispersal of the "July fog" (the dead season when no shearing is done), mortgaging his future earnings to the station store-keeper, working madly through his daily quota of sheep, and then, swollen to twice his original size, uproariously

departing to the nearest township, where at his favourite "pub" he "knocks down" the squatorial cheque and requests to be kept drunk so long as it lasts—those who paint this picture, and add the pendant of his being set adrift a week or a fortnight later by the rascally boss, the very same woe-begone swagsman and sundowner of a few weeks ago, purvey an antiquated article.

"On a changé tout cela."

The situation has become socially more intense. The shearer of to-day is a man who arrives on a horse, leading another, and with his bank-book in his pocket.

His visits to the township are with a view of entering his cheque to his account, or of forwarding it by post office order to his "old woman" at the homestead hundreds of miles away.

He is a member of a union with offices at the central bush townships, and his political views are of the most decisive and "advanced" order.

At the different "sheds" at which he works each year, in his more or less regular nomadic cycle, his letters and newspapers are awaiting him.

Frequently he is party to an arrangement whereby all the papers that could possibly interest him and his friends are mutually subscribed for.

Many sheds are better provided with "current literature" than town "mechanics' institutes" and "schools of art," which are subsidised by Government.

The political discussion among the men when they have "knocked off" work is perpetual, and its intelligence is yet more astonishing than its earnestness.

"You see," it is usually said in explanation, "we've generally nothing much to do in the bush but read and think—*and we reads and thinks a lot.*"

It is in the grasp of general principles, and their correct application to the questions of the hour, that these children of a primary and secular education are so strong.

How different to the muddle-headed localism, the sheer inability to see an inch beyond the absolute petty fact or side-issue of the English agricultural labourers, whose discussions among themselves make one despair of the whole generation!

At times the democratic instinct of the urban democracy is completely deceived by a "red herring," drawn with more than usual cleverness, but the politician has not yet appeared who can hoodwink the Bush.

Yesterday they made the "Queensland for the Queenslanders" movement which resulted in the arrest of the invasion of the Coolies, and to-day the cry of Australia for the Australians owes to them its widest and deepest national application.

These are the men with whom domestic treason or the foreign invader will ultimately have to reckon.

Australia as well as Russia has two most excellent generals called January and February, and Napoleon, the universal soldier, owed to their African and Asian fellows his first great lesson concerning Nature's malignant and irresistible power.

I would not set at a pin's fee the survival of any European army attempting to occupy a fraction of the Australian Interior.

What foes could be more formidable than these crack-shot mounted infantry men, in their own waterless steppes?

They would harry out of existence the best disciplined and best commissariat army in the world.

And, if ever things come to a certain pass down in the cities, so that the essential freedom of the country is imperilled, then we shall behold an armed and resolute Interior on the march.

It should be recognised much more fully than it is that the successful issue of the American Secession War was due to the Western States.

The rank and file of the Federal Army saved the Union in the teeth of the corruption of its own politicians, the waverings of its own commercial classes, the blunders of its own leaders, the military genius of Lee, and the insane enthusiasm of the solid aristocratic South.

The West was the heart of the country, the genuine America, and the Interior is the heart of the genuine Australia, and, if needs be, will do as much for the nation and the race.

The patience of these men is great up to a certain point, but when that point is reached and passed, and their mind is finally made up,

nothing but extermination will come between them and their desire.

At the present moment the residence clause in the several electoral acts has practically disfranchised the bulk of the shearers (for it is quite as much the exception as the rule for them to be at their homes at the time of local or general elections), and they feel the deprivation too keenly to let it long continue.

The cynical disbelief in political protestations, which in the past has made them negligent of their franchise, has given way before the new ideas begotten by the social pressure, and they consider the advisability of having members of their own.

So far simple agitation has sufficed to push through any measure they urgently wished for; but now direct representation embraces the theory of applying their socialistic ideas to the framing of laws, and they are determined to try it.

I recall with a singular delight my personal memories of many of the bush people.

It is, indeed, the rarest and most felicitous privilege to have been able to behold with your own eyes something which has ap-

proached, however remotely, to the ideal that is in your heart.

I have known little communities in the Australian bush which, so far as social manner went, realised for me much, so much, of what I desired in a democracy.

The absolute fearless friendliness of the children, their innate feeling of the kindly respect due to themselves as to others, their simple and expansive intelligence, their unaffected modesty and self-control — I have found intercourse with bush children one of the most charming things in life!

I could have asked nothing better of the gods than to have seen children of my own growing up like these, with the addition of the one thing needful to make them the democrats of the future.

Given an education, not the mere seeds, but the perfected flower and fruit of the modern culture, "the best that has been thought and known in the world" of literature, of science, of art, of music, what could not be hoped for from children such as these?

Athens actually existed.

The Ideal in thought and word and action

once was made flesh and dwelt among us, and who shall call it an impossible dream for such a miracle to happen again?

Little incidents of my intercourse with these boys and girls come back to me, and affect me like music or the story of some brave or beautiful deed; incidents, many of them, apparently so obvious and commonplace, but in reality full of a quiet and lovely spiritual significance.

I remember, for instance, the second evening of my arrival in one of these little communities, coming in home from a walk, and passing the houses of some of the permanent station hands.

There were children at some of the doors, and they called to me by my name as I went by, and wished me good-night.

First one and then another called, and to each I answered good-night, and would have added their names if I had known them.

Nothing could have been prettier.

School-children's picnics in England are usually rather painful things, chiefly owing to the self-conscious predetermined "affability" of the silly masters and mistresses or ladies

and gentlemen who manage them, and the resultant *gêne* of the offspring of the "lower orders" keenly aware of themselves as such.

Happily the bush people do not yet know of claims to social superiority, and behave as if all were natural equals.

I am at a loss to describe the results to English people, who cannot but be shocked to be told of the children of shearers and boundary-riders being so much better bred, so much more easily unaffected and gentle than those of county people and professional people and aristocrats.

Probably they will not believe it.

Nevertheless it is true.

Fruit is, of course, a rarity in the bush, and I remember when on one of these occasions (a picnic given to all the station hands) cases of grapes, peaches, and bananas were opened under the trees for the children, I expected a pardonable tendency to over-consumption.

But nothing of the sort happened.

That innate Australian sense of moderation, which makes a drunken native-born a creature quite abnormal, operated here also.

I watched the children, sitting chatting in

their quiet, unembarrassed way, eat a bunch of grapes, or a peach, or a banana, enough to satisfy them, and then rise to go back again to their games.

I recalled similar scenes in my native land, and realised what the glory of *caste* meant for thirty-nine out of the forty millions of us, and how blessed a change would take place when it had got a thorough hold in Australia, and all my soul went out to the great idea of the Anglo-Australian amalgamation.

How decisively, too, did these children make for every scrap of natural poetry that was to be found in their lives.

The love of music seems innate in all Australians, and its future effect upon the nation is incommensurable.

If you ask these children to sing, they stand up, with bright unabashed faces, and warble like birds.

English manners will yet, perhaps, teach them how to make mock-modest grimaces over it, and their "barbarism" will be ended.

When you meet the bush children going to school, some on foot, some on horseback, the boys and girls astraddle together, they

pleasantly salute you, and expect you to do the same to them.

Alas, they have not yet learned to order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters, and otherwise do their duty in that state of life to which it has pleased caste and the modern competitive system to call them.

But let me not seem, in my passion for bush children, to imply that I have not in my memory like incidents of the courtesy and kindness of the men and women.

Let me tell one, the first that comes to me.

I heard one night in a big station where I was staying that some one I particularly wished to see, a shearer, had arrived there but was going away again.

I wandered about in ineffectual search of him.

Chancing to enter the bachelors' quarters (the house of the unmarried station-hands), I found a stranger and asked him if he had seen my friend?

He said no, but that he had heard he was "camping out" down at the old saw-mills.

Then, seeing that I did not know where this was, he at once got up, saying, "I'll take you there, if you like."

It was a moonless night, and the path wound about among tanks.

We chatted together as we went, and presently, sure enough, lit upon my friend stretched out on his blanket in the grass.

After greeting him, I turned to look for my guide, intending to make the two acquainted.

But he was gone.

The simple courtesy and swift and kindly self-effacement of the man struck me at once.

A hundred instances of this delicacy in social intercourse come back to me when I think of the bush folk.

Let me give a very ordinary, typical example of the richer qualities of the heart.

It was during the full swing of shearing, with the weather cool and clear and early in the season.

Everything prompted to rapid and continuous work and departure in search of fresh work elsewhere.

An old station-hand, a man nigh in his dotage and a "pensioner" of the squatter's bounty (which took shape in a solitary dilapidated hut and "rations" as the just reward of

many years' labour) got drunk one evening, and in the morning was missing.

The moment the news reached the shed, every one, as the most natural thing in the world, stopped work, and went out in organised search parties.

Late in the afternoon he was found dead, and carried reverently home to his hut, a "pensioner" no longer, but merely a man by the dignity of death.

The "shed" stood to lose £15 to £20 over him, say 10s. per shearer (the pay of fifty sheep shorn), but the only grumbler was the squatter, who had not even thanks to offer them for concerning themselves with the fate of a tool of his, long worn out and flung aside as useless.

The different tone, the different temper of the two parties to transactions like these may well make disinterested creatures muse.

Oh, the mere money side, it would be in the very worst possible taste for ladies and gentlemen to touch upon!

Wherefore, when justice would decree that this onus rightly belongs, perchance, to neither party, why, we let it fall on to the more in-

significant, and airily talk of the weather or the latest flashy novel.

I cannot say how often and how flagrantly I have seen the natural generosity and goodwill of the average Australian "put upon" by employers.

Nay, but it is a broadly human trait, I fancy, and the retribution for it all still lies in the future conscience of mankind.

But the bushman has also his vices.

Like all stoical sufferers, has latent in him the cold mania of the essential gambler.

In his hour of "storm and stress" does not take to drink, like the Englishman; he takes to gambling, like the Chinaman.

In the old days, in the fight for organisation, won by the creation of the unions, the strikes at the shed were often broken up through the penniless Anglo-Australian shearer, the hero of the "knocked-down cheque."

Absolute want compelled him to accept whatever terms he could get, and he would even sign his acceptance of instant dismissal if caught talking to the station servant-girls!

The resources of the belligerent unions are rarely strained now by the drunkard, but by

the man who gets bitten by the black, vermillion-spotted spider of the cards.

He comes to a shed with two horses, stores, and ten "notes," earns there thirty or forty more, and he leaves it without a penny in his pocket to help him along over his weary trudge for two hundred miles to the next shed, where a "strike" is on, and he must be a "blackleg" or a burden to his fellows.

Gambling at the sheds is simply the tournament of sharpers.

You see your opponent cheat ; he sees you ; and not a word is said.

Each puts out his resources, and the weaker vessel soon begins to show cracks.

If he is a wise weaker vessel, he nonchalantly withdraws, owning that the other is "too good" for him.

If he is not, then he must pay for his vanity.

But rarely do you see a quarrel, unless it is a deliberately "put up job."

A cynical stoicism is the one approved attitude, though it finds a strange and apparently contradictory *sequitur* when the hour of action sees nothing but a reckless energy and courage.

I trust I have not seemed to idealise my friends.

They have (we have seen) their limitations, faults, vices.

They are heathens with a vanishing varnish of the worse side of our current civilisation.

Their burlesque types are trying enough, but they have (at least, to me) this one immense redemption—they are all fearless.

You will find loud strident boasters here, though their boasting is rarely empty, but you will find no one cowed and servile.

These are free men and free women, free boys and free girls, every one of them, and will not take the whip from anything born.

And that climatic pessimism of theirs endows their better moments with the divine tenderness of lovers.

Patronage they do not understand.

If it is very delicate, they are puzzled by it ; if it is gross, they at first take it as ridiculous ; if persistent, they resent it to the pitch of violence.

Touch their hearts, and they laugh as they die for you.

You will not (let me repeat) find these girls

falling into adoring attitudes before the alleged "higher type" of civilisation.

They look upon love as a strict republic, and they will wrestle with you in the spirit of a most un-self-sacrificing vehemence.

It may not be the realisation of the male epicure's view of marriage, but with a mate who imperiously and continuously demands of him his best, all his best, and nothing but his best, he stands a chance of evolving his epicureanism into manhood and winning a seraph as his reward for innate honesty and "grit."

How absolutely gone in these clear lean women's faces, with their honest, critical eyes and decisive lips, is the antique insipid prettiness and fashion-plate nullity still so dear to the heart of the average Englishwoman!

Poor things! the coatings of their stomachs have suffered at the hands of Bohea just as much as those of their brothers, and one is astonished at the profound and philosophic pessimism of "primarily educated" little girls in their teens, whose experience of things extends from the centre of a small selection to the circumference of a small district.

After all, who but a king (I cannot believe

it was Solomon, or what is the meaning of a venerable reputation and *la vraie gloire*?) would require to have committed the vast personal folly of palaces, fortresses, and cities before he found out that human existence was altogether vanity?

But let me not leave this as the last figure struck in upon my hasty and inadequate sketch of the perfected sample, the genuine type.

Let me try rather to fix it in the place which, despite its isolation, it is compelled to take in a civilisation to which it is at once so repellent and so hostile.

The following poem, which appeared in the last Christmas number of the *Bulletin*, under a pseudonym, and which is too excellent to be quoted in anything but its entirety, voices the gentler and sadder aspects of "The Sick Bushman":—

"I had written him a letter which I had, or want of better
 Knowledge, sent to where I met him down the Lachlan,
 years ago.
 He was shearing when I knew him, so I sent the letter to
 him,
 Just 'on spec,' addressed as follows, 'Clancy, of "The Over-
 flow."' "

“And an answer came, directed in a writing unexpected
 (Which I think the same was written with a thumb-nail
 dipped in tar).

’Twas his shearing mate who wrote it, and *verbatim* I will
 quote it :

‘Clancy’s gone to Queensland droving, and we don’t know
 where he are.’

“In my wild erratic fancy visions came to me of Clancy
 Gone a-droving ‘down the Cooper’ where the western
 drovers go.

As the stock are slowly stringing, Clancy rides behind them
 singing,

For the drover’s life has pleasures that the townsfolk never
 know.

“And the bush hath friends to meet him, and their kindly
 voices greet him

In the murmur of the breezes and the river on its bars,
 And he sees the vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended,
 And at night the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars.

* * * * *

“I am sitting in my dingy little office, where a stingy
 Ray of sunlight struggles feebly down between the houses
 tall,

And the fœtid air and gritty of the dusty, dirty city
 Through the open window floating, spreads its foulness over
 all.

“And in place of lowing cattle, I can hear the fiendish
 rattle

Of the tramways and the ’busses making hurry down the
 street,

And the language uninviting of the gutter children fighting,
 Comes fitfully and faintly through the ceaseless tramp of
 feet.

“And the hurrying people daunt me, and their pallid faces
haunt me,
As they shoulder one another in their rush and nervous
haste,
With their eager eyes and greedy, and their stunted forms
and weedy,
For townfolk have no time to grow, they have no time to
waste.

“And I somehow rather fancy that I’d like to change with
Clancy,
Like to take a turn at droving where the seasons come and
go,
While he faced the round eternal of the cash-book and the
journal—
But I doubt he’d suit the office, Clancy, of ‘The Overflow.’”

Nothing more intimately Australian, nothing
so brimful of the sad, sweet charm of the bush
and the bush life, has been done since the man
who wrote “The Sick Stockrider” went
silent.

V.

THE LAND QUESTION.

HENRY WARD BEECHER, speaking in the loose manner of a popular preacher, declared once :

“ If all Europe came here ” (to the United States, that is), “ we should not have people enough for the soil.”

No American, not even a popular preacher, would talk in that way now ; but there are still plenty of Anglo-Australians, particularly of the “ representative ” type, with their Elysian habitat *in posse*, if not yet *in esse*, in “ the dear old country,” who give more or less similar witness concerning Australia.

The truth, however, is that in both cases “ the soil ” is in the clutches of the landlord, whose desire for an increased population means simply the desire for labour “ cheap

and reliable," or, to put it in another way, for labour competitively at his mercy.

When Western Australia was agitating for responsible government, all the rich colony-trotting lords and capitalists—the men like Lord Brassey and the late-lamented Duke of Manchester and the late-lamented Lord Carnarvon—did their best to enlighten English public opinion as to the dangers of the thing.

They pointed out what a big place Western Australia was (to wit, nearly 976,000 square miles, or more than 16 times the size of England and Wales), and with only 40,000 or 50,000 people to look after all that, and how could they be "trusted" to do so to their own best advantage and to the best advantage of everybody?

I think I remember talk of this description on the part of Lord Carnarvon, who was an honourable man, though so, of course, are, or were they all—all honourable men.

But I wonder if he ever told any one in England that, under the "looking after" system of a Colonial Office that could be "trusted," he himself, the some time head of that office, had purchased the lease of 64,000

acres of the best land of the colony at the ruinous rate of one penny per acre, with the option of a further purchase of the freehold at 2s. 6d. an acre whenever he liked?

He might also have added that this purchase was in no wise encumbered by any conditions as to improvement, stocking, and so on, as would have been the case in any colony not looked after by a Colonial Office that could be "trusted."

But the late-lamented Earl of Carnarvon, I say, was an honourable man, and if he did not tell any one of this on such an occasion it must have been because he forgot it.

Or take the case of Sir R. W. Herbert, the late Permanent Under Secretary of State for the Colonies—did he, too, urge the case against "trusting" Western Australia with all those 976,000 square miles, and forget to mention that he also, like his friend the Earl, had made a nice little purchase of 64,000 acres of them at the same ruinous rate and on the same onerous conditions?

But Sir R. W. Herbert, late Permanent Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, is also an honourable man, and so are they all, &c., &c.

Sir A. Stepney is another of the 64,000 acre men of honour. Sir Julius Vogel has 145,000 acres, and no wonder in a worthless novel of his that "anticipates" the civilisation of the future, he says so little about the land-grabbers.

Sir William Mackinnon is credited with 128,000 acres; A. Muir and Sons, 140,000; Kelly and Hoddy, 600,000; A. R. Wallis, 200,000; Kennedy and McGill, 280,000; A. Forrest and Co., 1,300,000 acres; while the Union Bank of Australia owns in Western Queensland 7,870,825 acres, and there is another company whose property exceeds four millions.

"We should like to know," comments the *Brisbane Courier*, "what responsible government would have so dealt with the public lands?"

It is always pleasant replying to the questions of an old and esteemed friend.

I hasten, therefore, to submit the following figures which touch on the up-country land-owners of the *Courier's* own colony.

Mr. Tyson owns 229,748 acres of it; Mr. Archer, 179,240; Mr. Fisher, 161,947; Mr. Taylor, 147,310.

And all these, too, are honourable men, and none of them can conscientiously bring themselves to believe in a land-tax.

It is indeed a fact that two million acres of Queensland are apportioned among fifteen owners !

And there is still another point to make with regard to these colossal landlords.

“The soil” they have laid their hands on is not only naturally the best, but (speaking generally of Australia) it is that which is the most accessible.

Railways have a habit of running into the properties of the millionaires, despite all local agitations to the contrary, and considering the enormous sums realised by such courses, it is not surprising that average members of Assembly have frequently (especially in “the old days”) found their banking accounts liable to sudden expansions.

What is the result to-day ?

The railways, of course, are State property, constructed and too often worked at the public expense, yet the cry is for ever being raised by the smaller agriculturalists to lower what they call the prohibitive rates even to the

point (if needs be) of running the lines at a loss.

The Darling Downs fruit-growers certainly exposed an anomaly when they pointed to Tasmanian fruit underselling them in the Brisbane market.

Here was fruit coming over a thousand miles by sea, after having first been taken from inland and shipped, and being unshipped and passed into the Brisbane market at a cheaper rate than fruit brought by rail from a bare hundred miles up-country !

But the colony could not afford to run its lines at a loss.

How was the interest to be paid on the loans that constructed them, let alone the loans themselves ?

The freights, then, stand not only for the interest in the loans, but for the effort to pay back the original cost of construction.

The cry of the agriculturalists was a mistaken one.

The remedy lay elsewhere.

The land for a hundred miles either side any particular railway had risen at a jump on its former value from the date of the parliamentary sanction of that railway.

The public money caused this jump, which represented "the unearned increment" if anything did.

It proceeded from the treasury, and into the treasury it ought to have returned, and not into the pockets of Brown, Jones, or Robinson, or Archer, Fisher, and Taylor.

"For the State—not for Antonio."

There would be no necessity for "prohibitive rates" then.

But the Messrs. Tysons and Taylors and Fishers and Archers would not have quite as much capital in hand wherewith to obtain nice little properties of 229,748 acres, 179,240 acres, 161,947 acres, and 147,310 acres.

To put the matter plainly, these men and their fellows, by means sometimes (in the current commercial morality) justifiable, and sometimes unjustifiable, have slipped into their pockets, in the shape of increased land-value, millions of the public money.

The loss of these millions entails on the different colonies, where the Messrs. Taylors and Fishers and Archers and Tysons abide (and under different names they abide in all the colonies), burdens grievous to be borne

—so grievous, that in certain extreme cases, such as New Zealand, Queensland, and South Australia, I can only state my conviction that the sole economic alternative to making these worthy gentlemen and their urban and suburban fellows disgorge a little, is that ugly thing—bankruptcy or repudiation.

There is perhaps a third possibility, but it can scarcely be called an economic one, and that is a suppressed revolution of the South American type.

Just the same system has ended in just the same *crux* in the South American republics, where the blind effort of the more fiery Celt to shake off his Old Man of the Sea, takes the shape of insurrection against whatever government happens to be in power.

New Zealand, it is to be hoped, will not follow the example of Chili, or Queensland that of Argentina ; but in Victoria a similar crisis is recalled in the sombre memories of “ Black Wednesday,” when under the vehement leadership of (now) Sir Graham Berry, C.M.G. or K.C.M.G., I forget which, the last Victorian Agent-General but one, sheer terrorism extorted a satisfaction of the popular demands of the hour. .

What these popular demands would be now, it is difficult to say.

There is no sign of any decided policy.

To-day, as yesterday, the large mass of up-country workers, like their brethren of the towns, confine themselves to the question of work supply.

They "want work."

To-day, as yesterday, there is the same suspicious dislike to the large squatters, and the Berryan cry of "busting up the big estates" might be raised again with the same savage insistence.

In Queensland and South Australia, however, where land bills of the most extreme character, have made it possible for almost any one to "go on the land," with the result that no one has gone, the bushmen (and the question here is chiefly with them) have generally got to see that something else is wanting.

The land is no good to them without water, and the agriculturalists and fruit-growers clustered round the railway centres have gone a step further, and perceived that, even with soil and a moderate amount of moisture, nothing much can be done without a profitable market.

This fact has not yet dawned on the political consciousness, or else the political consciousness has refused to show any signs of it.

Certainly a comprehensive scheme of land legislation seems impossible.

The eternal tinkering process will have to be proceeded with, and failure after failure will be recorded.

Incomparably the two most (perhaps the only two) masterly minds in Australia brought to bear on the problem, Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith and Sir Samuel Griffith, practically confess themselves hopelessly baffled.

In the face of the natural conditions of the country, of the pressure of social questions, of the droughts and the depressions, they have had to sink their differences and coalesce, but what can they do?

They both have the sincere desire to settle people on the land, but desire is not fulfilment.

Sir Thomas' scheme of a Trans-Continental Land grant railway rests, as we have remarked, only a scheme, and perhaps that is why he still clings to the idea that it would have resulted in the necessary sale by the contracting syndicates

of the land all along the line, and thus of the creation of a rival populace.

Experience in other countries with similar climates (Argentina and South Africa, for example) has not shown this.

All it has shown is the creating of a few millionaires and of a helpless, meagre, and subservient class of "mean whites."

Sir Samuel Griffith perseveres in public works, railways, artesian springs, rabbit fences, and what not, expending loan-money (that "flourishing colonial industry," as his colleague calls it) and hoping for better times.

He has made his full confession of political faith as an opportunist, but his opportunism is only too often not of the right sort.

To call Protection "an exploded system of political economy," and then in less than two years, faced with a sudden popular conversion in its favour, to propose Protection pure and simple as a "plank" of your political platform, is to degrade opportunism to the level of the merest demagoguery.

Nothing good is to be hoped from a politician when this sort of thing becomes a characteristic.

He cannot for a moment be taken seriously.

And this is just the reason why a man like Sir Henry Parkes, who has managed first and last to fill so large a place in the public eye, is also destined to so speedy and absolute an oblivion.

An adroit and unscrupulous obstructionist, his one aim has been to render government by any one else impossible.

Put into power with strong and obedient majorities, he has always frittered away the time in self-glorification and senseless, tentative legislation about this or that, looking out for a new popular hot fit to furnish him with a new cry in case of disaster, while all the while this portentous Land Question has grown and grown in difficulty until it threatens a terrible social crisis, if not civil war and revolution.

But what will he care ?

He will be safely dead and buried before the dams burst—the dams which shall let loose in deluge and devastation what might have fertilised all the country.

“One of the earliest things I remember,” writes an acute young Australian-born journalist, “except things having a direct relation to my own stomach, was going to the biggest room in

our little village to hear a white-headed old man with a face that took my fancy at once, because of its close likeness to the medallion frontispiece of Ballantyne's 'Gorilla Hunters'—to hear him tell the population of the district all the wonderful benefits that were going to flow from the Local Government Bill, which was to become law this time in spite of all that the sons of Belial could do.

"If I am not mistaken, it was only to perform that task that he had unwillingly returned to Parliament after solemnly and finally shaking its dust off his boots a few months before.

"I didn't understand what the speech was all about at the time, but I remember it impressed me a good deal more than it did on reading it again last week, when after the lapse of twenty years it was delivered as seriously as ever—a little threadbare from repeated use—the same old bill, the same old promises, the same old man, and the same old denunciations, only of a new family to the same old Belial.

"In the interval, the doors of political life have closed on him something like ten times—'for ever' each time."

The dreary history of political life in New

South Wales for the last two decades is all there, the everlasting history of ministry after ministry ruined by its own stupidity and corruption, and not one item of permanent value contributed towards the solution of the one essentially real Australian Question—the Land Question.

Griffith's opportunism has been habitually of a nobler sort, and, with all its cowardly faults of omission (the leaving the urban and suburban land untouched and untaxed), it stands for the one effort made in Australia to treat this question in any comprehensive and adequate manner, and that is why, when taken with M'Ilwraith's ideas on Nationalism, so large a share of the attention and sympathy of every intelligent Australian is given to Queensland and her political leaders.

There too Labour in its organised forms represents, though with South Australia as its companion wing, the vanguard of the great proletariat movement, and, in the wisdom of the leaders and the generally high level of information of the men, gives hopes of something like a policy, and of a policy none the less decided for being moderate.

In Victoria and New South Wales the Labour Camp was in total disarray, every sort of counsel prevailing among Leaders and men, but the general tone was to be found in a fatuously contented acceptance of antique methods.

Unhappily the Australian Labour Federation of Queensland, just fresh from a great and bloodless victory, where the mutual forbearance of organised employers and employees had given the promise of a permanently better relation of Capital and Labour, was dragged into the "Big Strike," and in Queensland a savage contest between squatters and shearers verged perilously on armed violence.

The whole matter sums itself up in this way :

Do the people of Australia really and truly desire a yeoman class? And do they desire it with any adequate realisation of what such a class will cost?

To say that the Land Question can be settled, and can only be settled, by legislation of an undisguisedly socialistic character, is not in Australia, as it is in England, to say that it frightens every man of anything like means into at once condemning it.

Australians are not so easily dismayed by bogey phrases and *rococo* pseudo-politico-economic claptrap.

But even the calmest and most reasonable of them may hesitate before accepting the "thorough" policy with regard to the creation of a yeoman class.

The *tenuiores*, be they selectors or shearers, or (what is becoming more and more usual) the combination of the two, are struggling with all their might to retain their exceedingly insecure foothold on the soil.

They know quite well that little or nothing can be done with the land itself.

Their only hope is in winning the monopoly of the shearing work, ousting on the one hand the more irreconcilable "cockies" (free selectors), and on the other the "tag-rag-and-bob-tail" labour of the bush.

How great is the pressure of the situation can be gathered from the fact that in the "Big Strike" even the Victorian shearers fought through to the bitter end with their brethren of New South Wales.

No one who knew the conditions of the struggle could doubt of the final results; but

it did not need any very profound sympathy with the cause of Labour to see that the total rout of the unions meant a complete upset of the social balance, with, in all probability, the most disagreeable consequences to every one.

With the capitalistic squatters triumphant, the *facilis descensus* of wages down to the *Avernus* of the life-line was inevitable.

The temptation to try and snatch something like the old enormous rates of profits would be too much for them, and success would be won at the cost of ruining the already hard-pressed petty proprietors.

They would be thrust back from that exceedingly insecure foothold on the soil into the abyss of social degradation and despair.

It would only want a severe season of drought and depression to end in something like a civil war in the interior, with raging bush-fires as an outward symbol of the blind fury of man.

And at the end of it the Land Question would remain as unsolved as ever.

Turn now for a few moments to the towns. Nothing can be more serious than the shape taken by this question in the Australian capitals.

The aggregations of population in them are astonishing.

Over 30 per cent. of the people of New South Wales and of Victoria respectively, despite a united territory eight times larger than England, live in Sydney and Melbourne.

It should be understood that the relentless process of our individualistic civilisation is being carried to its logical conclusion in Australia far more rapidly and thoroughly than in England.

The traditional personal relations between landlord and tenant, which softened, however little, the extortions of the English country magnate, never existed in the towns, and the only Australian landlord is urban and suburban.

Malthus's theory of population, so true in itself, can already be applied, with its current falseness, in this case also.

Australia, this isle of continent as large as the United States, feels the pinch of population after a colonisation of fifty years—that is to say, all the best land has been “grabbed” by private owners, the worse land is impossible to any but capitalists, and the vast bulk of

the people is already entering upon the dreadful struggle of competition, degradation, and slavery.

Is not a case of alleged "over population" like this striking enough to make even Herbert Spencer and the other effete political economists wonder whether Malthus's Law finds such perfect examples in current cases as they tell us?

In attacking Sir Samuel Griffith's Land Tax in 1888, Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith said that such an impost was absurd, seeing that 93 per cent. of Queensland was still Government property.

If he had added that that 93 per cent. comprised land utterly useless to any one but a big capitalist or even a big syndicate, what a different complexion would his words have taken!

And all the while great fortunes are being made by the urban and suburban land-grabbers, trading on the forced congestion of the towns.

Nowhere in the world has the urban and suburban land-grabber been more of a curse than in Australia.

Englishmen can have no conception of it.

The acute parallelism of the case in the Western States of America accounts, in my opinion, for Henry George's passionate advocacy of Land Nationalisation and his singular mental obliquity with regard to the other forms of social monopoly which tyrannise over and must ultimately enslave us.

Many a vigorous intelligent Australian, wearing himself out in an abominable outpost climate, has assured me that all would go well if there were only a law compelling the sale or improvement of urban allotments.

The way the process works is this.

No sooner does a township show any signs of "going ahead" than speculators of all sorts and pecuniary dimensions "grab" all the available land in or about it.

Then they sit down, and wait till they can realise 100, 200, 300, 500, or 1,000 per cent. profits, as the case may be.

It falls on to the luckless shoulders of the inhabitants to work up the value of the land to the point at which these absentee speculators care to sell or offer building-leases.

Towns are thus thrown back ten, twenty, or thirty years in their development, and genera-

tions of toilers are plundered of the results of their toil.

Such flagrant instances of the immorality of the "unearned increment" should have brought home to every thoughtful, intelligent (or uninterested) Australian the fact that the remedy for this condition of things is to be found elsewhere than in a law compelling the urban landlord to sell or build.

The same principle, as we have seen, affects the agriculturalists, and indeed runs right through the entire life of the community.

It seems to me, I repeat, that some serious effort to get hold of the "unearned increment," the result in Australia to so great an extent of the expenditure of the public loan money, is the only alternative in certain colonies to bankruptcy.

In New Zealand the land-grabber is strangling the country, and it is the same in Queensland and South Australia.

Despite the something more than lavish public expenditure, new loans desperately floated to pay the interest of old loans when the old loans were already being far too much used to try and pay their own interest—despite

the amazing fertility of land still largely virgin, Queensland is steadily sinking deeper and deeper into the quicksands of deficit and unredeemable debt.

Public works undertaken merely to circulate money cannot be expected to pay for years to come, and in the black and protracted hours of drought and depression this is too often the only real policy pursued by government after government.

Englishmen have no conception of the alternations of value in all business concerns in Australia.

All depends on the water, and, if the water does not come, then woe to everybody.

A man who owns thousands of acres of land, or exceedingly valuable urban or suburban property, may have a difficulty in a bad season to raise a few hundred pounds in cash.

The broad distribution of wealth, so much belauded, is far more apparent than real.

We are told confidently of each town mechanic owning his little suburban cottage and plot of ground.

When you come to look more closely, you find that nine out of ten of these men are in

the hands of the Building Societies, heavily in arrear with their payments or mortgaged up to their necks with the banks.

The suburban Building Societies are becoming big landlords as the purchase of these cottages in their 16 and 32 perch allotments falls through, owing to the inability of the *tenuiiores* to pay their monthly instalments.

One needs to have seen the inner working of one of these societies to realise their extent, and the power they can put into the hands of their controllers in local and general politics places whole suburban quarters at the mercy of unscrupulous jobbers.

The extreme character of the Australian climate, its savage alternation of droughts and deluges with accompanying depressions and "bonus," is all in favour of the big men and all against the small men.

Every depression enslaves multitudes and leaves only the few to profit by the ensuing "boom."

The winnings of the survivors are enormous, and the knowledge of this nerves people to endure anything if they can only manage to "hang on."

The question is—how long will the great majority still cling to the delusion that they have a chance of being of the number of the fortunate ones?

Just so long as this delusion can be kept up, and every soldier of labour can be persuaded that he carries in his knapsack the field-marshal's baton of gold, just so long will the tide of more or less socialistic legislation be held back.

At the present moment what is called New Unionism is everywhere based on the perception of the folly of this illusion, and it flatters itself that it has found a remedy.

In Australia the organisation of Labour is in many ways admirable.

Proud and confident in their strength and in the efficacy of their methods, the workmen dreamed that a general Labour Federation would give them without a struggle something very like the control of the great national industries.

In each colony the Labour of the Interior was to join hands with the Labour of the Coast, and then unite in one vast confederation.

But the Capitalists were not idle in the face of so portentous a scheme.

Combination was an easier task for them, and in the race for readiness they were first.

Beyond all question they provoked the "Big Strike," and, from the impartial point of view, they did so justly.

They merely anticipated an eventuality that was inevitable.

A long series of splendid victories or honourable compromises has ended for Australian Labour in a crushing defeat.

No one can doubt for a moment the result of any conflict anywhere between United Labour and United Capital.

To say nothing of the fact that Capital fights with her superfluity while Labour fights with her necessity, Capital has the overwhelming advantage of an unfailing flank movement.

If in Australia, where Labour is so comparatively scarce and well-organised, there can yet be found in a few weeks' time enough men to replace 30,000, or 40,000, or 50,000 strikers, then what is the use of expecting that in England or America there is any hope of doing anything but snatching a victory here and there from isolated and disorganised capitalists?

The moment Capital gets frightened and coalesces, Labour's chances in a stand-up fight are reduced to *nil*.

The New Unionism will have to recognise this, and renounce its empty hopes.

No ; it is by means of the Ballot-box alone that their hopes have any approximate probability of realisation.

If the New Unionism had added to its fighting policy of vast and ever vaster schemes of combination, the theory of transformation of the Labour Movement into a political party, it would have made a magnificent step.

What Parnell did for the Irish, some Leader of genius may yet do for Labour.

To the Workman, Liberal and Conservative should be equally indifferent.

Of both he should make his market, selling his support to the highest bidder, and callously deserting the last purchaser when the other is driven by necessity to raise his price.

A free and independent Labour Party, bound by a pledge to perpetual seats in opposition, holds the only fruitful future for Labour whether in Australia, or Europe, or America.

If the terrible rout of the " Big Strike " has

taught this to the Australian Workman, it has not been suffered in vain.

The defeat of the Scotch Railway Strikers, with moderation as well as justice and public sympathy on their side, should have taught the same lesson to at least the leaders in England.

They struck at Christmas, the best because the busiest time—they struck unexpectedly—they struck all but *en masse*.

They fought heroically, standing by one another to the last, cheered by the aid and enthusiasm of their fellow-workmen of all sorts and by the sympathy of the general public ; and they were beaten humiliatingly by masters who merely assumed the arrogant position of a refusal to recognise the existence of their union.

The reason was simple.

Capital had taken fright and coalesced, and Labour knocked itself to pieces against a stone wall.

The Land Question takes many shapes in Australia as everywhere.

English people may be surprised to learn that quite as serious an aspect of this question as it expresses itself in the Social Problem

in Australia no less than in England is the degradation of the city female workers, unskilled and semi-skilled alike.

In proportion to the number of its inhabitants, I cannot think that Sydney contains less prostitutes than any city in the world.

In Melbourne, unions have kept free and independent—and that comes almost to mean pure and “respectable”—whole classes of girls who in Sydney are the numberless recruits of the streets.

The direct relation between organisation, £1 or 25s. a week, and morality, and disorganisation 10s. or 11s. a week, and immorality, is quite startling when viewed in the actual shape of (say) the waitresses of Melbourne and Sydney.

It is the same with the domestic servants.

Sydney and Brisbane are crowded with girls who prefer to slave in the shops for 10s. a week and “find themselves” to going into service at 14s. or 15s. a week with board and lodging.

That 10s. a week in the city is and must be supplemented in some way, unless the girl has a home, is manifest.

She requires "respectable" clothes in the shop (indeed, will never get or retain a place without them), and the supplementation usually begins in the gifts of dress from "gentlemen friends."

The process of the easy descent into hell is familiar to us all.

In Melbourne and Victoria generally the union enables girls to extort from their mistresses humanely reasonable terms of work and wage, and a finer, more hard-working, self-respecting lot of girls it would be difficult to meet.

They do their duty to their employers with the expectation of their employers doing their duty towards them, although to the average British mistress the theory and still more the practice, may seem redolent of all sorts of "presumptions," "impertinences," and so on. I did not hear just and kindly women talk in that way, but quite the contrary.

Nothing can be clearer to any impartial person than that, speaking roughly, there is something radically wrong all over the world in domestic service as an institution.

In nine cases out of ten, it partakes far too

much of the nature of white slavery to be anything much better than a curse.

Ladies have plenty to say from their own uncontradicted point of view, the shameless selfishness of which has often amazed me ; but how that point of view would change were they, just for one month, to go out into the open market and take a place as a servant themselves !

In Australia, where class-subserviency is not as in England an inherited instinct, and where the tradition of wages that guaranteed freedom and independence is still current, the rapid drop down to the life-line in all the unorganised trades has startled every thinking Workman and Workwoman.

The truth is that during the last decade even in the organised trades, the pressure of new applicants has been growing more and more embarrassing to the managers in their desperate efforts to keep up wages to the union standard.

They have been compelled to throw obstacles in the way of would-be members and thus to create an outer class of malcontents who are glad of every opportunity to combat the unions

by taking service as "blacklegs" in the hour of struggle and embarrassment.

The cessation of immigration in all the colonies but Queensland¹ has brought no relief.

The increase of population and the arrival on the scene of the younger generation has more than made up for it.

The schemes of a general labour federation found their chief incentive in the ever-growing dread of the workmen that in another few years it would be too late for them to struggle for a monopoly.

The "Big Strike" has shown that, in the face of any adequate combination of Capital, it was too late already.

The effort after the boycotting of all labour but that of the unions is in itself a confession of failure.

It means in the long run, if successful, the establishment of an aristocracy of labour.

Something of this sort has been managed during the last thirty or forty years by certain trades in England with disastrous results to all the others.

¹ Queensland has now ceased to subsidise immigration.

The reaction is to be seen in the New Unionism, which puts things on a broader base, but it must inevitably be driven up to the same apex of class selfishness.

This is true, and it conclusively exposes the fallacy of any final solution of the social problem by trades-unionism; but it is also true that at the present moment no other means of consolidating anything like so large a percentage of hitherto disorganised and degraded labour has been hit on, and individuals must stand by their party.

The savage temper, that has already been induced by the failure of what seems to most of the workmen their last hope, is peculiarly dangerous in a country like Australia.

With the memory of their past comforts still vivid, they will scarcely consent to being deprived of everything except the mere necessities of hand-to-mouth existence.

The vagaries of the special constables during the "Big Strike" were exceedingly provoking, but the strikers were resolutely orderly, being confident of victory.

In the next severe struggle it will be different. The belief of the Australian Workmen in the

efficacy of trades-unionism to do all that is practically wanted is profound.

In the hour of their bitterest disillusionment they are far more likely to give heed to counsels of anger and defiance than to those which bid them seek their remedy by transforming their class-organisation into a political movement.

The sombre idea of violence is never quenched in the heart of the people, suffering what it believes to be spoliation and wrong.

When that idea is general and acute, the next step is for it to be broadly recognised, and the next step is for it to be acted upon.

Such action is revolution and civil war.

Emerson says that the American Civil War "gave back integrity to the nation," and seemed to think the boon was worth the terrible cost.

Can Australia not unravel the Gordian knot of her Land Question? of her Social Problem?

Must she, too, get some Alexander to shear it through with the brutal impatience of the sword?

How melancholy a prospect for the latest-born of the nations that she, like all the others, will only be able to win her liberty "by blood and iron,"

The public, in its collective aspect of moderation, has had some cause to cry a plague on both the houses of Capital and Labour, seeing that the triumph of either party would be a far worse social disaster than all the annoyance of the protracted struggle.

The average Australian has the good sense to thoroughly believe in a free and independent labour, and he knows that that freedom and independence could not be maintained for a day without the aid of the unions.

Her yeomen and her sailors made and preserved modern England and the modern English Empire through the long death-struggle with France, which began with Louis XIV., and only closed with Waterloo, and what has she done with her sailors and her yeomen?

In the hour when England stands at bay in the Armageddon of the nations she will at last realise the use to her of her rotten parasitic classes of caste and capital.

With her mercantile marine manned with foreigners, "blacklegs," and Lascars, the servile sweepings of the labour markets of Europe and Asia, she will call in vain for the sea-dogs who saved her from Spain, from Holland, from

France in the days of Drake and Blake and Nelson.

With her army recruited from the stunted and invalid youth of the "sacrificed classes" of her towns, she will see her enemies sweeping away the fragments of opposition which she can still place between herself and destruction.

I cannot admire too much the exultancy with which stupid and rancorous party newspapers, backed up by their crowd of selfish and slow-witted Philistine "correspondents," from Professor Huxley down to the most pitiable form of social imbecile, shout and caper round such spectacles as the routed railway unions of Scotland or sing pæans over the victories of the Shipping Federation.

For this exultancy has apparently been able to impose itself on the nation at large, and the average Englishman stands by complacently, in the expectation of getting his coals a penny the ton cheaper or his sugar a farthing less the pound, while the owner of the bone and sinew of the nation and of the race is being garotted and plundered by a band of brute beasts who care no more for the race and the nation than

they do for Greek art or the Athanasian Creed.

I have lived too long out of England, I find, to tolerate all this now, and I am more and more at a loss to discover how my countrymen can trouble themselves about the dinner parties of the Duke of Westminster or the domestic affairs of Mr. Parnell to the enthusiastic extent they do.

Nay, even such soul-stirring passages as Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule blasts and Mr. Chamberlain's counter-blasts (which thrill Professor Tyndall so) weary me to death, and I cannot see that it matters in the least to any true lover of England whether the general elections put Gladstone and Harcourt into power, or Salisbury and Hartington.

In any case it means the wholesale purveying of red herrings, and the nation and the race are starving for want of a little meat—Australian or otherwise.

Liberal or Tory in England, Democrat or Republican in America, it makes very little real difference to America or England.

They are both the same in office, and nothing that they do pleases me.

People in Australia call M'Ilwraith a Tory, but when he deliberately commits himself to "the exclusion from Australia of Chinese and other servile races, and the preservation of the entire continent to white men," I feel that he has some true idea of the meaning of loving the nation and race to which he belongs, and his Toryism troubles me not.¹

"To repress injurious monopolies, allay sectional jealousies, and prevent the creation of privileged classes."

It is still an Australian Tory leader who is speaking, and I have not yet heard anything approaching such sentiments from any English lips, and this is, I am sure, one of those many reasons that make the average Australian dubious as to throwing in his lot with such a country as England in the magnificent shape of Imperial or any other sort of federation.

Yes, it is just this magnificence which frightens him.

His own aims are so much more homely.

He doesn't want to see his ships manned

¹ This reads curiously enough to-day, I know, when the Liberal and Tory chiefs of Queensland have just gone back on every pledge and agreed to the reintroduction of Kanaka labour.

with effeminate and cowardly "coolies" at nominal wages: he doesn't want to have the riff-raff of alien peoples destroying the petty labours of his cities: he doesn't want to see arrogant directors refusing to recognise unions and crushing out the justest efforts after the abolition of inhuman wages and inhuman hours of work.

It is his fatal want of imagination that makes him so cold about the most inspiring subjects, such as the Queen (God bless her!), or "our old nobility," or our splendid civilisation, or our unrivalled commerce, or our unparalleled respectability.

It is also true that he doesn't want to see his seamen and shearers absolute masters, or his organised trades too obviously "running" the country; but he has a prejudice against people who apathetically watch men, able and willing to work, slowly starve to death; and is not, I repeat, in the least afraid of grappling with the problem because the local Mr. Herbert Spencer and Professor Huxley (I speak always of the professor in his capacity of scientific pluralist and *bourgeois* householder) howl out that it is all socialism, though he may be willing to admit that it is a step in that direction.

But what then ?

The idea of monopoly is in reality the prime idea of the day, and is the absolutely inevitable and necessary step towards "the coming slavery" of State Socialism, the snake which is to swallow up all the other snakes.

Many people prefer to call it social organisation, and rightly see in it the reaction against the extreme competition which was ruining all good production and devastating the life of its producers.

Labour cannot be blamed any more than Capital for aiming at a monopoly.

Lawyer politicians, I see, are with a noble chivalry urging the claims of "free labour" in the strike disputes by appeals to the British sense of liberty and natural right.

Why do they not allow a little indulgence in "free labour" among themselves ?

No monopoly is more absolute than that of the lawyers, and none is more intrinsically unjust and injurious to the public.

They barter justice, which should be free and equal to all, encompassing the pursuit of it with a heavy mulct for themselves.

Doctors hold a monopoly, and nobody blames

them for their efforts to keep up prices and limit competition by a draconic system of professional etiquette.

The very capitalists, ship-owners, and sheep-owners, who broke up the Australian unions in the Big Strike to the cry of industrial "liberty," have been straining every nerve to win, and have now won, that very thing which they denounced in the shearers and sailors as a horrible wrong to dissentients and the weaker brethren—to wit, monopoly.

I cannot raise a red cent of enthusiasm (as the Americans say) for capitalistic monopolists, *in esse* or *in posse*, spouting claptrap about "the rights" of "free labour," as a means to prejudicing the public mind in their struggles with the unions.

I am equally cold to their accusations of intimidation, so invariably worked up and exaggerated for polemical purposes.

No one has used, is using, or will care to use pressure of any sort that comes to hand, more freely than the capitalistic monopolists *in posse* or *in esse*, and the beauties of the boycott are as profoundly appreciated by them as by anybody.

These things are recognised more frankly by the average Australian, I find, than by his English fellow, and it has led the antipodean public in almost all the industrial disputes to opine that reasonableness and moderation are to be found on one side quite as much as on the other.

At any rate there is no *prima facie* prejudice against Labour as there is in England, and the whole pressure of public opinion is towards conciliation and compromise.

The party that refuses conference, and open conference, puts itself at once in the wrong, and the wanton protraction of strikes through the stupid arrogance of directors refusing to recognise the existence of the unions would provoke universal and overwhelming condemnation.

So far, so good ; and the prospect in Australia, despite the extraordinary general, but only temporary, loss of head at the beginning of the Big Strike, is not too disquieting.

“Social reform in this country,” wrote to me the editor of one of the large dailies that had opposed the action of the unions on this occasion as being wantonly premature, “social

reform will go on rapidly and steadily, whatever may happen."

No one who is a true lover of his nation and his race, let him rank himself as Liberal or Conservative, Radical or Socialist (I care not how), but must recognise to the full in things social and political the law of evolution.

But this in no wise interferes with his equal recognition of the value of the past.

I complain of the Conservatism of England that it is provincial in sentiment, and of its Liberalism that it is the merest mechanism.

So far from finding in the conscious ideal which the best politicians of England set before them something greater, broader and deeper than that of the best politicians of Australia, South Africa, Canada, I find the reverse.

The rank and file of English politicians are in most respects superior to the Anglo-Australians, Anglo-Africans and Anglo-Canadians; but the one or two finer colonial spirits that have, in the vaster freedom of the new lands, assimilated "the world's prophetic soul dreaming on things to come," the men like M'Ilwraith and Griffith in Australia or like Rhodes in South Africa—these view things with a scope and actual

elasticity unknown to the timid myopicism of Lesser Britain.

And their children will be the rank and file politicians of the colonial future.

If to desire with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength to preserve all that is beautiful and good and glorious in the past and the present—to retain in our future the spiritual sense of the Art and Science and Literature of all the ages and all the climes—to see “the best that has been thought and known in the world” the perennial possession of mankind—if this is to be a Conservative, then how readily do I call myself one !

But to bolster up unjust or ridiculous pretensions, to galvanise into a ghastly semblance of life things which have had their day (and done their good in that day), but are now dead and ought some time ago to have been decently buried, let this be the task of a greedy, egotistic stupidity which would sooner wreck the nation and the race on the rock of revolution than give up one ounce of its pound of flesh.

Is, then, a certain section of the Conservatism of Greater or of Lesser Britain to be allowed to provoke civil war by a selfish and pedantic parochialism ? This is the question.

Those are viewed as foes to the human race whose whole and sole scheme of action is an insane desire to destroy; but how less are they to be regarded as foes of the human race whose sole and whole scheme of action is an insane desire to preserve?

The great danger in the future lies in the greed of the unintelligent rich and in the despair of the unintelligent poor.

We should beware of both.

In the past, legislation was made far too largely in the spirit of the former.

The Reign of Terror in France showed us what to expect from legislation in the spirit of the latter.

I praise the best Conservatism of the Colonies because it realises this so much—because it is not blindly selfish or blindly pedantic, but, firm in its belief and reliance in the one true and great Conservatism, “sees things steadily and sees them whole.”

The transference of the chief energy of the Labour movement in Australia from the unions to the houses of assembly will be accomplished successfully, if only the bitterness of large and protracted contests can be avoided.

I do not think that the classes will fight for a privilege which the bulk of them has not yet grown to look upon as a right.

There may be the same difficulties in maintaining law and order when the law is the creation of Labour and the order is that enforced upon Capital and Caste, as there is to-day when the law is the creation of Caste and Capital and the order is that enforced upon Labour.

But if the process of the change is not too rapid, if the extremists on both sides can be kept under, if the mutual pledges of sincerity and moderation are in any degree adhered to, the danger of revolution and civil war will pass quietly away in the dawn of a brighter day.

POSTSCRIPT.

A FEW LAST WORDS FROM THE ENGLISH POINT OF VIEW:—POLITICS AND THE COLONIAL QUESTION.

It has often struck me how good a thing it would be if we could introduce into English political life some modification of the Greek law concerning ostracism.

What could have been better for Mr. Gladstone, for instance, after his suicidal Home Rule Bill of 1886, than a sentence of five years' banishment to Canada, South Africa, or Australia? the last by preference, because it is 16,000 miles off.

I am sure the Australians, or Africans, or Canadians, would have been very glad to see him; they all have excellent newspapers, and follow English politics with interest and intelligence; there is now a 2½d. Imperial Postage, and "the old man eloquent" would thus have had an admirable opportunity of viewing affairs

polemical, *quorum magna pars fuit*, from the vantage post of a serene distance.

Or suppose Lord Beaconsfield could have been sent in the same manner in 1880, to observe on the spot the practical workings of his "spirited foreign policy" in India or South Africa.

Perhaps we should have possessed him for several years longer ; perhaps even (it is indeed an animating thought!) we should possess him at this very hour ; for assuredly he fell a victim to our genial winter climate, and we all know the tonic effects of South Africa.

Think, with what an enlarged and chastened spirit he would have returned to us in 1885, still hale and sparkling with wit, just in time to take the reins of government from the faltering hands of his rival, just as his rival five years before had taken them from his.

Of a truth there would be something really educative, under a system like this, in the possession of an enormous and superb empire.

As it is, the very best we can hope for in our political leaders, when they have been committing blunders of the criminal species, is a pleasure jaunt at a gallop, like that of Lord

Randolph Churchill in South Africa, wherein he seems to have learned something about every topic but the one supremely important one which presents itself in the new land of Ophir.

But what is the use of talking in this way ?

For good or evil (and quite as much, it seems, for evil as for good) the system of modern Party Government, government by see-saw, is an integral portion of the British conception of politics, and the leaders must stand perpetually in the breach of "words, words, words," or renounce their leadership.

No one, I fear, will take my ostracism theory seriously, and what is the use, in a land ruled by fogs and a middle-class, of saying anything that people will not take seriously ?

I abandon it, therefore, but with a keen sense of the pity of such a course, for I am convinced, that never until an Englishman has lived for at least three years (six, of course, are better) up and down in one of our great American, African, or Australian colonial possessions, can he have a right conception of the relative importance of the political questions of the day.

Consider the case of a genuine historical parallel.

Any one, even Macaulay's schoolboy, can see now that, at the close of the last century, the Colonial Question, that is to say, the American Question, was the one overwhelmingly great question of the time.

Making the best of a bad job, Englishmen for long affected to believe that our rupture with our American Colonies was no less for our good than for theirs.

No such flattering unction can any of us, possessed of the average share of intelligence and candour, lay to his soul now.

We all see now that this rupture stood for a postponement for centuries of the world-domination, if not also of the world-federation, of our race.

The dream of the solidarity of mankind then for a few moments drew near to the children of men.

The first step to its realisation was proffered to one of the European peoples, the people that had won America and India, and, though it did not yet know it, a vast portion of Africa and the whole of Australasia.

England could not take that step then.

England was completely occupied with her own affairs, the affairs of a little foggy island in the north-west corner of Europe, the witless mother of nations.

The American War was fought out as a side-issue of the popular struggle with the Crown ; and the interests of the race, and in a large measure those of mankind, were sacrificed, with an imbecile heedlessness, to the mere frustration of the tyranny of a narrow-minded bigot, rapidly qualifying himself for a lunatic asylum.

The prodigious personal influence of George III. in this matter is one of those things which almost make one accept Carlyle's individualistic theory of history.

It was indeed this Satan of Respectability who, faced by the shining and seraphic force of Pitt, was able to set in movement the engine which beat back for generations and generations the progress of the race.

True that if George III., in the person of his political tools, had not lost us America, we might very possibly have lost it in some other way later on, thanks to the resolute arrogance

of temper of the dominant officialism of the period ; but this is mere speculation.

All we know is that, in the dust and clatter raised in England over the conspiracy of the King to master the ship of state, the one overwhelmingly great question of the time was hopelessly eclipsed and at last completely misunderstood by the nation at large, until "the wheel had come full circle" and England was in the dust.

Never had she fallen so low because never had she risen so high as when, at the fiery inspiration of Pitt, she stood for a few years the foremost nation in Europe, the leader of civilisation, the darling of the future.

"His Majesty," said Pitt on that memorable April day when he, who had, with a passionate sincerity, told Englishmen, in the short-lived hour of their fratricidal success, "you cannot conquer America," came, with death in his eyes, to protest against the despairing abandonment of that very America, "His Majesty succeeded to an Empire as great in extent as its reputation was unsullied. Seventeen years ago this people was the terror of the world !"

No other Englishman ever spoke such words

before : no other Englishman has ever spoken such words since, because, here a hundred years and more after they were uttered, no other Englishman has felt and understood that the heart and brain of England might achieve, if only she could be taught to trust to the courage of her bravest and to the genius of her best.

I do not say that Pitt foresaw in 1776 the United States, any more than the India of to-day, but I do say that he realised the incommensurable future then lying before "this people" in both India and America, and that he treated politics accordingly from a standpoint of nobility and intelligence attained by no other Englishman who either preceded or has followed him.

Well, we can all see now pretty clearly what we lost in the American War.

The struggle between the Crown and the nation is closed for centuries to come, and probably for ever.

Politeness has in a great measure taken—outwardly, at least—the place of arrogance as the public expression of the official mind towards the Colonies.

It seems to us as if we had completely passed from the phase of national and social development which rendered possible the "misunderstanding" of 1776.

Instead of a Grenville fixing the American import duties at his pleasure, enforcing the law which restricted American trade to the mother-country, and finally proposing an American excise duty as a means for Imperial revenue, we have Canada and Australia erecting hostile tariffs against us and the world at large in the interests of their "native industries," *nemine contradicente*.

Instead of a General Gage, sent at the head of repressive regiments to assume the governorship of Massachusetts, we have Queensland, a colony with a population of well under 400,000, jauntily and successfully rejecting, by a mere protest of its party leaders and on more or less whimsical grounds, a governor nominated by the Imperial Government.

The contrast is striking.

The sole instance in which the cardinal principle of all democratic rule, no taxation without representation, has been broken is the Naval Defence Bill, a measure that received

the prompt authorisation of all the Australian Houses of Assembly but one.

Pitt bade the England of yesterday "respect America's fears and resentments."

Does the England of to-day need any such bidding with regard to her Colonies in America, Africa, and Australasia?

The reply to this question, a question which is being asked so frequently and with such force by a certain class of Imperial Federationists, is surely obvious.

Yesterday and to-day are affairs quite different.

The democratic tide has risen in a hundred years—has risen enormously.

Passing by for the moment the little matter of our official and national arrogance, it should be understood that the fears and resentments of, say, Australia at this moment with regard to her past and future relations with England, have very little to do, more especially in their more positive shape of claims and desires, with the fears and resentments of America in 1775, say, after the closing of the port of Boston.

The American Colonies never for a moment

contested the legality of the import duties levied by England or of the English trade restrictions.

It was only when Grenville proceeded to tamper with their internal taxation that he raised the same hornets' nest which Charles I. did with his ship money. The attack on the sacred principle of the pocket was at once realised by every American, and it was at last felt that at this rate (to use Pitt's words once more) "these millions of people, so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to submit to be slaves" would soon be "fit instruments to make slaves of the rest."

The bitterness of the Convict Transportation Question has completely, or almost completely, passed away in Australia now.

The struggle at the Eureka stockade, when the flag of a republic waved for a brief hour on Australian ground, is a dim memory, devoid of any acrimonious appreciation of the fact that English redcoats stamped out that first effort at organised popular revolt.

And, as we have seen, the Imperial Taxation Question has never existed in Australia at all. What, then, are these fears and resentments

about? What is the meaning of these claims and desires?

To begin with, Englishmen seem wonderfully incapable of understanding how hateful England in her representative capacity can be and usually is.

The arrogance of temper of the dominant officialism of the latter half of the last century, we are agreed, provided our share of the fuel of what (if we had only been able to suppress it) we should have called the American Mutiny of 1776.

That same temper assuredly played an even more pronounced part in the production of the Indian Mutiny of 1857, and at this hour it is still strong enough to fix between the English Dives and the Indian Lazarus a great gulf which both find impassable.

That same temper, exercised with more self-restraint because it encounters so savage a retort, has done its best in the past to alienate from us the sympathy and good-will of every Africander, Canadian, and Australian.

Do we know this? Do we realise it?

Are we aware that, in backing up a pack of supercilious idiots, as we have so often done,

and are still, alas! so prone to do, we are playing with the future not only of the nation but of the race?

With what glibness do our Liberal friends agree to all this, and point the moral and adorn the tale of it by the demonstration of the fact that the dominant officialism was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be the special hot-bed of Toryism.

Our Liberal friends, however, have obvious axes to grind, and their candour is only partial.

As a matter of fact, and speaking broadly, the Colonial Office, under Liberal administration, has been quite as unpalatable to the Colonies as under the administration of the Tories, if not more so; but I pass that, because I want to point out to our Liberal friends that another of the causes of the hatefulness of England in her representative capacity concerns them rather more closely. Arrogance of temper is found in other places than the official class.

Commerce is well acquainted with it, and the purely mechanical view of things, the theory of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest, does not hold good in practice to

anything like the extent which our popular but played-out political economists would fain have us believe.

How much of the success of the foreign revolt against the trade dominancy of England is due to the trade arrogance of England?

It may be difficult to say, but the manifest fact remains that the man you have bullied and "bluffed" is in the very best possible condition for listening to any argument which will give him what he takes to be a reasonable justification for dispensing with further intercourse with you.

While I was in Australia I saw the conversion of three out of the four great eastern colonies from Free Trade to Protection (the fourth, Victoria, had been converted years ago), and it was borne in upon me irresistibly the extent to which that conversion was due to what the political economists love to call sentimental reasons—reasons connected with personal and colonial resentment of the manners or want of manners of the English importers.

Yes, the middle-class, the Liberal middle-classes of England, are, in their exterior rela-

tions, just as arrogant of temper as our official class, and the sooner they realise it and strive to amend, the better it will be for us all.

And yet this is only the beginning of their misdeeds.

Not every country—shall I even say no other country?—is blessed (or cursed) with a regnant middle-class having a capacity for the enunciation of the sublimest cant concerning “Christianity” and “civilisation,” coupled with a cold and ruthless selfishness in action which recalls the palmiest days of Spanish empire in the Old World and the New.

French and Dutch treatment of the “inferior races” may be good or bad, or both, but it has at least the saving grace of sincerity.

The Portuguese in Africa may act villainously, but at least they do not cloak their ill-deeds with the sanctification of any other “mission” than that of putting money into their pockets.

The French attacks on Madagascar or Tonquin may have been, or may not have been, unrighteous; but has all the grandiloquent gabble of Mr. Gladstone succeeded in justifying the bombardment of Alexandria from the point of view of Justice, Humanity, and all the

other middle-class moral mockeries with capital letters ?

Mr. Bright, like Brutus and all the others, was an honourable man, and a kindly and a Christian, forsooth, and passionate after the kingdom of heaven on earth, go to ; but that did not in the least prevent him from bitterly attacking those who doubted the evangelical blessings of unrestricted competition, and we all remember his savage onslaughts on the wretches who strove in the Factory Acts to protect the presumably godless weak against the self-testifying godly strong.

The English Philistine, then, may believe that it is all in the interests of Justice and Humanity and the rest that Free Trade should destroy the artisan industry of India, and glut the soil with the famine-stricken corpses of thrice or three hundred times the number of those who fall in a modern war, but who else believes it ?

Does the Frenchman or German or Russian, the American, Australian, or Canadian believe it ? Scarcely !

No ; they do not, and nothing seems ever likely to make them, believe that a deluge of

English shoddy manufactures stood, stands, or is going to stand for the realisation of peace on earth and goodwill towards man.

They believe, on the contrary, that this deluge stands for so much money in the pocket of the English shopkeeper, and they wonder why on earth he seems to think it necessary to bring Justice and Humanity and the rest into the affair at all ?

But where would a manifesto of Mr. Gladstone's be without "the help of the Almighty" ?

How would he be able to satisfy us all with unverifiable promises on every conceivable subject without the aid of his sounding appeals to Liberty, Right, and all those other big verbal balloons whose sole contents is gas ?

The English middle-class trout must be tickled in the style that is pleasant to his peculiar cuticle, but to on-lookers the process is quite the reverse of edifying.

So much for the hatefulness of England in her representative capacity as it has presented itself to the feelings of, let me say, only too many "Colonials."

But there is another aspect of the case, and

that aspect is to be found in the effect that the action of the English Governments in general, and of the Colonial Office in particular, has had on what we may call the feeling of colonial nationality.

I shall speak here only of Australia, because I do not know either Canada or South Africa in any intimate sense, and, although all I have seen myself and learned from others concerning the general sentiments of Africanders and Canadians leads me to believe that they differ but slightly, and that rather in degree than in matter and manner from those of Australians, still it is best to confine oneself in a case like this to ground where one feels more or less secure.

Well, the contrast between the Australian national fears and resentments to-day and those of America yesterday is curious. The one vital national issue for the Eastern States in the middle of the last century was the road to the west—the freedom to expand beyond the Alleghanies.

The duel between Montcalm and Wolfe which ended in the heroic deaths on Abraham's Heights was only the *coup de grâce* aimed by

the genius of Pitt at the whole scheme of French empire beyond the Atlantic.

Montcalm, also a man of genius, had realised from the first that to grasp the English Colonies within the cordon of the Mississippi meant the future dominancy of his race in the northern continent of the New World, and had he only had to deal with the colonists and with the average English Government of the hour, he would, in all probability, have succeeded, and a French America would have more than balanced an English India.

But in both places French genius went down before English courage, because for once in a way England also had genius to show and genius at the helm instead of in the hold.

At the bidding of Pitt, English blood and wealth were poured out with no stinted measure; first in breaking the fatal cordon (Fort Duquesne fell in 1758), and then in following up Montcalm to his central stronghold and crushing him there (Quebec fell in 1759).

Americans to-day may say what they please about the small services the early colonists received from England, but the fact remains

that it is to England they owe the very gift of their nationality.

If they had had to face France in 1750-60, with Montcalm at Quebec, Ticonderoga and Duquesne, they would most probably have held to-day in a Latin United States somewhat the same place as the French Canadians hold in Canada.

Australia's complaint is that of recent years England has not only shown her firm resolution not to spend a penny of English money or a drop of English blood on behalf of her antipodean offspring, but that she has, from sheer indifference and the lazy desire to avoid anything like even a diplomatic disagreeable with France or Germany, sacrificed Australian interests *à cœur léger*.

New Guinea is obviously of little practical use to Australia just at present, of as little practical use as the West was to the American colonists a hundred and fifty years ago. Yet a glance at the map shows that New Guinea, the largest island in the world (unless Australia itself be called an island), and geographically no less than geologically, ethnologically, and zoologically its companion, plainly appertains to the

future of the Australian nation, or at any rate the possession of it by any other nation would be a confine to all free Australian expansion.

Thus the large majority of thoughtful Australians regarded the matter, and especially those who belonged to Queensland, the colony most intimately concerned. So long, however, as they believed that there was no danger of the annexation of New Guinea by any European power, they were quite content to leave things as they were, and wait for the time when the growth of Australia should naturally bring about what seemed so obvious a result of itself. What actually happened is already old history.

The Queenslanders began to suspect German designs on the island.

The Colonial Office loftily assured them that they were making themselves ridiculous. The Queenslanders became more and more certain that they were right and that the Colonial Office was wrong, and at last Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith, the Premier, boldly annexed New Guinea to the English crown.

The Colonial Office, under the inspired rule of Lord Derby, retorted on such an insane piece of presumption with a savage snub.

The annexation was disallowed, and the only comfort permitted to Queensland and Australia was Lord Derby's explicit assurance that he held a guarantee from Germany that she had no designs on New Guinea.

Of course Lord Derby had been fooled, for Germany had long made up her mind to a serious and sustained policy of colonisation in the Southern Pacific, and the annexation of the whole or a large portion of New Guinea was an inalienable part of that policy.

The lapse of time has shown that success has evaded her, and Australians to-day can contemplate at least without dread the splendid German steamers that pass from port to port in their course of dropping the millions of the fatherland into "the unharvestable ocean," but this in no wise affects the angry colonial appreciation of England's efforts in behalf of her dependencies, and who shall say that the hour of danger is yet past, or at what an appalling cost Germany may yet have to be bought out of her bankrupt possessions.

It is the same story that has to be told concerning France and her settlements in the South Sea Islands.

The loud-tongued pretext is little or nothing. Naturally Australia does not want French convicts: she has quite enough English social outcasts to see to, as well as her own.

But what in reality disquietens her is the perpetual sight of these great steamer lines like the Messageries Maritimes and the Deutscher Lloyd, palpable tokens of the French and German intention of "coming to stay" and of the design to hem her round in an ever-narrowing ring of foreign and hostile settlements.

And what in reality irritates her with regard to England in this matter is her conviction, based on such bitter and unequivocal experience, of France and Germany being perfectly aware of the fact that they can break with perfect impunity any guarantees they may see fit to give in unpropitious moments.

In a word, Australia feels that the Colonial Office cares for her either quite platonically or not at all, and she begins to be restive under such a hopeless maladministration of her affairs.

And who shall say that she is not right?

Who shall say that Germany and France in New Guinea and in the South Sea Islands may not, within the next hundred years, prove as

severe a danger to Australia as France in Canada, and on the line of the Mississippi did to America a hundred and fifty years ago?

In any case how imbecile a course was it, for the mere want of a little moral courage, to allow such a problem to win standing ground, and how right was the instinct of the budding nationalism of this people to struggle against it from the very start.

In a fit of ill-humour, leading German papers, alleged official or semi-official "organs," talked airily about conquering or annexing Queensland.

Queensland smiled, but stranger things than at any rate the determined effort of Germany to realise something for her vast and useless expenditure at the antipodes may happen within the next few decades.

France, too, might, under given circumstances, realise that she had mettle more attractive here than at Numea or the Mauritius.

The point is that French and German attention has now become steadily fixed on the antipodes, and that distinct German and French interests have been created there at a cost of serious sacrifices, and no nation cares to keep

on playing a losing game past a certain point.

Napoleon III.'s adventures in Mexico are now said to be a mere dynastic incident, but how about Madagascar and Tonquin and Senegambia, concerning which by no means the last word has yet been heard.

And here, I say, comes in practically the immense advantage of a residence of several years in one of our great dependencies; because this seems the only way in which one can get to understand their point of view in all these matters and, still more, because it alone seems able to give a man a right conception of the relative importance of the political questions of the day.

For the truth is, that at this present moment an Englishman has something greater and grander offered to him than patriotism.

England may be much to him, but the Empire—and by the Empire I mean rather what the Empire may become than what it is—should be more.

When this actually happens to a man, his outlook into politics suffers a severe change.

It may be that formerly he regarded the

system of Party Government with a tolerant, if not with a favourable eye. He felt that it had done the State some service, and that it appeared capable of doing it still more.

Viewed from a distance, it is astonishing how, in almost every special instance, what impresses one chiefly about this system is its appalling futility.

Both parties are apparent as being in reality without either fixed creed or fixed policy, and the ship's helm rocks wildly to weather and lee.

I used once to think that there were vital differences between the Democrats and Republicans in America.

I perceive now that it is mainly the difference between the leaders—between Mr. Blaine, say, and Mr. Hill, or between Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Harrison.

And who shall declare that in England the mere personalities of Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone yesterday, and of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury to-day, do not constitute quite half of the popular sentiment in party-rule?

We must decline to take seriously either Conservatives as Conservatives or Liberals as Liberals.

Neither of them form what the naturalists call a true *genus*.

Nor yet is it possible to take the party leaders seriously, at least let us say *very* seriously.

Our politicians since the time of the elder Pitt have proved to be a mere procession of insular administrators.

True, that that was all that was required of them—and this soon came to mean what was possible to them—first in the blind and desperate struggle with Napoleon and then in the ordering of England to suit the rule of the middle-class.

But a new era has certainly dawned now—a new expansion not only of the nation but of the race—a new chance for the creation and for the rule of a new Pitt.

When Themistocles was asked at a feast, presumably by some impertinent person who wished to demonstrate the statesman's social limitations, if he could play on a lute, he replied (in the Baconian phraseology) that he could not fiddle, but yet he knew how to make a small town a great city.

How to make a small nation a great empire

concerns our politicians but moderately, but were there ever such fiddlers !

Surely never since Nero's unique performance on a certain occasion in Rome—though this is the speech of excess, and only to be excused by the disgust of a disinterested ex-Englishman in the turmoil of a General Election, wherein he seems to see nothing much more than a hundred absurd side-issues and one vital issue hopelessly misconceived by both parties—Conservatives blindly denying adequate local government to all parts of the United Kingdom, and Liberals blindly according practical “national” autonomy to a rabid and racial section of 3,500,000 out of 40,000,000.

For this is surely where party government has landed us—in this imbecile choice between giving far too little or far too much, and what sane and satisfactory way can there be found of making such a choice ?

“Be one people ! ” cried Pitt ; “Forget everything but the public ! I set you the example ! ”

Alas ! has Lord Salisbury ever set us the example ? has Mr. Gladstone ever set us the example ?

Think of the difference of temper between the work of a national leader and of a party leader.

"It is the people," said Pitt to his Cabinet, "who have sent me here."

Mr. Gladstone would have to say the Gladstonian Liberals and Lord Salisbury the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists.

Think of the difference, Englishmen to whom England is more than a synonym for a class dominancy, Englishmen to whom the Empire is more than even England, think of the difference!

But these are matters of too tropical a nature, too intimately connected with existing parties and persons for consideration here.

Quo, Musa, tendis? Desine pervicax
Referre sermones deorum et
Magna modis tenuare parvis.

Let us keep from the Tom Tiddler's ground of contemporary controversy, whatever it cost us.

In several of our public men is to be seen a genuinely sympathetic feeling—in many of them a vaguely benevolent and rather fatuously patronising feeling—towards "the Colonies,"

but so far, with one solitary exception, I have heard no public utterance in England that showed anything like an adequate apprehension of the point of view of these Colonies with regard to their own and imperial matters.

That solitary exception is Lord Carrington, and I could seek for no more striking example of the great gain to an Englishman that is implied by the continuous residence in one of our self-governing dependencies.

Not long after his return from his five years' governorship of New South Wales, he read before a general meeting of the Imperial Institute a thoughtful and interesting summary of his impressions of Australia—"Australia as he saw it."

"Five years ago," he said, "I landed in Australia with my wife and my children, hardly knowing a single soul by sight in the whole country; my great desire was to be free from prejudice and open to impressions."

Very quickly these impressions led him to see the magnitude of the differences between the social conditions of the two countries.

"A scattered population, according to European notions, in a vast country; a small pro-

portion of that population settled upon the soil ; freedom of mind and habits nurtured by more air, more sun, more space ; influence centred in Sydney and in other of the larger towns, but not in the thinly-peopled country districts—all are striking features of New South Wales. The most salient feature of all was the power of growing and conscious strength.”

The actual shape taken by this power did not escape him. “ Men,” he saw in this new land, “ have been so occupied with the vividness of the present, with the importance of their own individual affairs, that public opinion has not become so ‘ crystallised,’ so keen and sharp, as in the Mother Country. But within the last ten years public opinion has been advancing, like everything else, by leaps and bounds, and is rapidly becoming a very strong ‘ juvenile’ indeed, with a will of its own, and the Australian will is a question which has to be faced. . . . The idea of Nationalism—a very different thing from Separation—is strongly growing and increasing in Australia, and the course of history, as usual, will probably be closely connected with ideas. . . . Neither England nor Australia will suffer dictation. . . .

The people of Australia seem to be entering upon a new era of national life. . . . They consider that the age of tutelage is over. They will not admit for a moment that they are not as fully politically educated as the average English voter, and they ask that they should be under no more restraint or control by the Governor, as to purely local affairs, than the people of England are by the Crown."

So much for the actual impressions concerning the people among whom Lord Carington passed "five happy years" in the effort to fulfil his conception of a Governor as a man who should be "the messenger of peace and goodwill, and while loyal to the strict letter of the Constitution, should be in touch and harmony with the national aspirations and the national rights of that particular Colony in which he has the high distinction to represent Her Majesty the Queen," or better still, the idea of the solidarity of the Empire.

They give us, as it seems to me, the only interpretation of the facts possible to a man of candour and intelligence, and assuredly it was good for the average Imperial Federationist with his wonderful ignorance of these facts, to

listen to them, and afterwards to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them.

But he was soon called upon to receive an even more unpalatable lesson from the same source.

Lord Carrington's Bristol speech, delivered last November, reached a larger and more important audience than that of the *habitués* and *protégés* of the Imperial Institute.

For the first time the English public heard something very like an enunciation of the general views of the Australian public.

True, that Lord Carrington sometimes spoke as a Liberal to Liberals, and any one who does that, just as any one who speaks as a Tory to Tories, or as anything else to any one else, must expect to give a reasonable discount on what the French call the *vraie vérité*—the absolute sincerity—of what he says; but he spoke also as a responsible English administrator and politician, the most successful of Australian governors and a man whose loyalty to England and the Empire was beyond all question. His speech made a sensation as it was bound to do, because much of what he said was both new and true, and because

almost all of what had been said on the same subject by the returned Anglo-Australians who babble or scribble on English platforms or in English papers was either false or antiquated, or both antiquated and false.

“There is a grave danger,” he declared, “especially in the autocratic policy of the Tory party.”

The Tory party by their autocratic policy maintain the divine right of a certain class of English Englishmen to rule the Empire ; and by asserting the superior capacity of the English Englishmen they in fact imply a racial inferiority in their brethren of the same blood, simply because they live on the other side of the Irish Channel or across the broad blue sea.

There followed a pretty sharp attack on Lord Knutsford as “the living incarnation of the old Downing Street *régime*” which seems to have astonished no one more than the polite Lord Knutsford himself, who is certainly a distinct improvement on his predecessors, notably with one or two of them whose autocratic policy emanated somehow or other from the Liberal party.

However, that only all the more emphasises

the dictum of Lord Carrington that "it is the clear duty of all Liberals carefully to consider the present policy of the Colonial Office, an office the traditions of which are regarded by our great Colonies very much in the same light as the Irish regard the traditions of Dublin Castle."

But although this was indisputably the part of his speech which created the sensation—I mean this candid statement of the Australian idea of the Colonial Office, and of even its latest chief—the most important part was his criticism of the Naval Defence Bill.

This Bill, as has already been remarked, was passed promptly through all the Australian Assemblies with the exception of Queensland where it was defeated and only ultimately accepted under protest. How much that promptitude was due to general ignorance on the subject and how much to a misapprehension of the amount of control over the Australian squadron accorded to Australia, it would be hard to say.

Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith expressed it to me as his opinion that, if the provisions of the Bill had been as well understood at the time of its

acceptance as they were then (in 1888), it would not have passed through any House of Assembly in Australia, save perhaps in Victoria.

Lord Carrington's treatment of the subject, considering that the Bill was passed in New South Wales almost without comment, and that it was not till some time later that public opinion in that colony ripened in the matter, shows a quickness at apprehending the real drift of things which is indeed remarkable.

"We all remember that troops were suddenly withdrawn from Australia some years ago. The Colonies asked for these troops to be allowed to remain, on the condition that they were to pay for their maintenance, at any rate for a time. The Colonial Office pointed out that the principle was all wrong, and the late Lord Lytton, Tory Secretary of State for the Colonies, said: 'A Colony which is once accustomed to depend on Imperial soldiers never grows up to vigorous manhood.' What is wrong in the army is right in the navy; and this colonial maintenance problem is being tried in Australia at the present time.

"This arrangement is as follows:—

"Seven ships built at the cost to the English

taxpayer of nearly a million sterling have arrived at Sydney. Five of them are to be maintained at the cost of the Australians for ten years. England commissions the other two in case of war. It sounds all right, but will this experiment succeed? Ships should have only one commander, *i.e.*, the admiral, and no fleet can exist under dual control. But how can you have taxation, even voluntary taxation, without representation? The Colonies will be certain before long to want to have something to say as to management and placing of these ships, as the excitement over the 'Egeria court-martial' plainly shows. And, to increase the difficulties, the Colonial Office has acknowledged a claim of Admiral Fairfax to precedence over everybody except the Governor of the colony in which he happens to be. So that if a Governor of a neighbouring colony comes on a visit, the Queen's representative in that colony has to give way to an officer of the rank of a major-general; and we all know that in England officers of our army and navy 'have no place in the table of precedence by right, custom, or statute.'

"This claim, which shocked colonial senti-

ment, was received with a shout of laughter all over Australia, and is a dead letter and impossible to be enforced.

“Perhaps some people may say these are trivial matters, but—

A pebble in the streamlet scant
Has turned the course of many a river ;
A dewdrop on the baby plant
Has warped the giant oak for ever.”

I have quoted Lord Carrington's criticisms on Australia because of the weight which they have with the general public ; because English people will listen to unpalatable “home truths” from those whose position and antecedents seem to guarantee a more or less solemn sense of “responsibility” ; because my good friends the Anglo-Australian Imperial Federationists cannot attempt to dispose of such criticisms, as they have attempted to dispose of others equally or more outspoken, by merely denying their truth or cogency.

Lord Carrington concedes to the Colonial Office of to-day a plentiful supply of good intentions : indeed he says it is paved with them after the alleged manner of “another place.”

But he points out that to-day good intentions are here but the commencement.

"If," he says, "we are still relying on the traditions of dear old Downing Street to keep us altogether" [in the Empire], "the whole fabric will fall to pieces like a pack of cards. Is it," he goes on, "an absolute certainty that mismanagement and want of perception in time may not cause our Empire unconsciously to slip through our fingers? And if this happened, what excuse would the Government of the day be able to give to an indignant democratic England? What would be the position of the well-meaning, well-intentioned Secretary of State? Past mistakes of past Ministries would be of no avail to him. In despair he might turn to the great countries whom flouts and jeers, as in the case of Newfoundland, or indifference and misunderstanding have alienated; whose development Centralism (or as the Australians understand the word), Imperialism, has retarded; those great countries which formerly looked upon their elastic union with England as a creed and a glory. *It is, however, not yet too late to initiate a new constructive Colonial Policy, friendly and fearless, in harmony with the spirit of the times.*"

What shape such a new constructive Colonial Policy should take, Lord Carrington does not state, or even attempt to state, and, as I have remarked, he all along speaks quite too obviously in the character of a Liberal arraigning Tories, whereas the part of candour and intelligence here obviously is to admit that both Tories and Liberals have been "sadly to seek" and must set off, side by side together in pursuit of a better habit of mind.

And this brings me to what some people would call the one practical suggestion which I have to make on the subject.

Things, after all, are as they are. Party Government rules us, or is the 'accepted system, and we must make the best of it, if we wish in any actual manner to influence the course of events.

But there are not wanting signs that it is not only we poor partyless individuals—we who sit disconsolately on the rail, as the Americans say, and cannot make up our minds to descend definitely into either side of it—it is not only we in this country who are profoundly discontented with that system.

Nothing has impressed me more, after an

absence from England of years, than the indisputable fact of the growth of that discontent, and the effect which it has had on at any rate one side of our national politics.

I cannot do better than quote Lord Carrington again when, speaking as a Liberal propagandist, he says :

“As regards the Foreign Office, there has been little criticism on foreign affairs, as no one knows better than Lord Salisbury himself that we Liberals feel it far more important that England should show a united front to the world than that we should snatch any party advantage from criticism at home. Had we wished it, Newfoundland and Zanzibar would have presented an ample field for the severest condemnation.”

Let us pass the polemical aspect of the matter and the noble party disinterestedness of our friends the Liberals over Newfoundland and Zanzibar.

What remains as verifiable and a genuine cause for congratulation seems to me to be this—namely, that Lord Salisbury and the Tories generally, and Mr. Gladstone and the Liberals generally, did, and do, both feel that it *is* far

more important that England should show a united front to the world than that either of them should snatch any party advantage from criticism at home.

And this has borne fruits in the Foreign Policy of the Unionist rule of the last six years, a policy obviously a compromise between the jingoism of Lord Beaconsfield and the *Laissez faire* which Mr. Gladstone at one time saw fit to preach to us as the exterior gospel of commercial respectability.

The fact remains, the fact on which all true lovers of England, and still more of the Empire can congratulate themselves, that something approaching a national sentiment on the subject of our Foreign Policy begins to win general acceptance in contemporary politics.

Even the clap-trap orators of the rowdy constituencies should learn that England in her Imperial capacity is far too serious an affair to be sported with in the interests of the Little Peddlingtons or Big Peddlingtons, or of "the great and grand old Liberal Party," or "the great and grand old Tory Party," and of both the great and grand old parties put together.

And what strikes one, therefore, is this :

Why cannot the Colonial Question also be recognised as a question that is to be put outside the sphere of party politics ?

Why cannot it be realised that the Colonial Question is of an importance already much larger and infinitely more far-reaching than even this Foreign Policy, on the national character of which Englishmen are beginning to insist ?

For, when all is said and done, a hundred years hence it may be as manifest as the sun in a cloudless sky that the Prime Minister who put in at the Colonial Office a mere party nominee—a man either indifferent to or ignorant of the feelings of the Colonies, and who thereby embroiled us with them in hideous misunderstandings and hateful strife—was as responsible for all this and all its portentous results as George III. was for the loss of America.

Is there indeed no perception among Englishmen of the cogency of the crisis ?

Do they not see that the next decade—the two or three next administrations—will, in all probability, contain the decision of the integrity of the Empire, and the whole future of the nation and of the race ?

That decision may arrive later than this: it may also arrive sooner.

No one can foretell the hour, but all can be sure that the hour is coming—coming perchance like a thief in the night.

Is there no power of insistence from the quiet intelligence of this nation that Tory or Liberal shall in this matter meet on a common platform; and that the appointment to the Colonial Office of any more “living incarnations of the old Downing Street régime” should simply be looked upon as an impossibility?

Alas, England is still a little foggy island in the north-west corner of Europe, completely occupied with her own affairs, the witless mother of nations!

Is the Colonial Question to be fought out as a side-issue of Home Rule, and the interests of the race and in a large measure those of mankind to be sacrificed, with an imbecile heedlessness, to the mere exigencies of a party struggle?

Once more is the dream of the solidarity of mankind for a few moments to draw near the children of men—once more the first step to its realisation to be proffered to one of

the European peoples—the people that has won immense possessions in America and Africa, the whole of India and Australasia, and a thousand glittering islands and splendid outposts, wherever men can see “the moving waters at their priestlike task of pure ablution round earth’s human shores”—once more the actual issue to be hopelessly eclipsed and at last completely misunderstood by the nation at large, until once more “the wheel has come full circle,” and England is in the dust.

To repeat such a blunder would be to write down the condemnation of this nation as a nation for all time.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A.

THE rival manifestoes of Sir Samuel Griffith and Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith, the leaders of the local Liberal and Tory parties at the Queensland General Elections of 1888, are of more than ephemeral interest. They will give Englishmen some idea of what Liberalism and Conservatism mean—or rather, profess to mean—in Australia.

SIR SAMUEL GRIFFITH'S MANIFESTO.

TO THE ELECTORS OF NORTH BRISBANE.

GENTLEMEN,—You will shortly be called upon to elect two members to represent you in a new Parliament. It is my intention to submit myself again as a candidate for your suffrages, and I take this early opportunity of addressing you upon the present position of public affairs.

The two great questions especially before the country at the last general election were, as you are aware, the proposed introduction of Coolies from British India, and the construction of Railways on the Land-grant principle. On both questions the constituencies spoke out plainly, and the statutes under which the Colony was liable to be inundated with Asiatics, or handed over to the mercies of non-resident monopolists, have since been repealed.

I wish we could believe that the dangers themselves, the imminence of which was much greater than is generally supposed, had completely passed away.

The Liberal Party has no need to be ashamed of the work that has been done in the last four years. The programme put forward by its leaders has been consistently followed, and our efforts have been to a great extent successful. Besides dealing with the two questions to which I have already referred, we have abolished the wholesale alienation of land by pre-emption and so-called auction; we have secured an adequate return from the Crown Lessees, while giving them such a tenure as will enable them to put the land to its most profitable use; we have offered facilities for the acquisition of land by *bonâ-fide* settlers, unequalled by any previous law; while at the same time a deadly blow has been struck at the class of persons who took up land for merely speculative purposes, without any intention of *bonâ-fide* occupation or use, and the result of whose operations may be seen in the vast areas of magnificent soil lying idle and locked up from settlement in various parts of the Colony. It is not surprising that these persons and their friends should loudly denounce the existing law, and demand a return to the former provisions, so profitable to them and so injurious to the country.

I do not claim that the present land laws are perfect; undoubtedly much remains to be done in order to completely solve the question of bringing together the land waiting for occupiers and the men craving for the soil. But the endeavours of the Government to promote actual settlement have already produced the most encouraging results, and I am confident that when other necessary action, to which I will advert directly, has been taken, the existing law, if fairly administered, will be found eminently successful and beneficial.

The action of the Government with respect to the Pacific Island Labour Trade, which provoked most bitter opposition and vilification from those persons who profited by the former abuses, has effectually retrieved the character of Queensland in the eyes of the world. The legislation of the present Parliament relating to Local Government, the Licensing Laws, the Public Health, the Patent and Copyright Laws, the Defence of the Colony, and the Protection of Workmen, would of itself be sufficient to distinguish its existence. We have, after a severe struggle, established the principle of Payment of the Expenses of Members of the Assembly. Much other legislation of a practical and useful character has been accomplished, and Public Works have been vigorously prosecuted in all parts of the Colony. The duration of Parliaments has not yet been shortened, but I trust it soon will be. This is almost the only part of the programme which we laid down in 1883 that has not been carried into effect.

During the period which I am reviewing a great change has taken place in the relations of the Australasian Colonies, both amongst themselves and with the rest of Her Majesty's Dominions. The Australasian Governments are now systematically consulted on all matters affecting the Colonies, and the most studious attention is paid to their wishes. I claim for the present Government of Queensland that the reputation of the Colony has not suffered in their hands in the many matters with which they have had to deal affecting our external relations.

The necessity for united action on the part of the Australian Colonies is becoming daily more apparent. A beginning has been made by the establishment of a Federal Council, the constitution of which, however, is admittedly of a tentative and imperfect character. The greatest obstacle hitherto in the way of complete unity

of action has been the reluctance of the Colony of New South Wales to join with the other Colonies. I entertain strong hopes, however, that this difficulty may soon be overcome, and that a Federal Legislature may be constituted on a wide and enduring basis, including representatives of all the Colonies. I shall continue to use my utmost efforts to bring about this result.

We have lately had to contend with the consequences of the most disastrous period of drought that has ever afflicted Australia. It is the fashion of our opponents to lay at the door of the Government all the disturbance, either in public or in private finances, that has been caused by this calamity. And although I do not suppose that sensible persons attach any weight to such criticisms, a brief comparison of the actual financial results of the present and preceding Administrations may help to dispel some of the errors that are so industriously circulated on this subject. During the four years from July, 1879, to July, 1883, when our predecessors were in office, there was an alleged excess of revenue over expenditure of, in round numbers, £500,000. Of this amount, however, £382,000 was a sum raised and set apart by law under the Douglas Government for the construction of Railways, which was bodily appropriated by their successors, while £200,000 was the produce of abnormal sales of land by auction—that is, sums raised in excess of £71,000 per annum, which I will take, for the purpose of comparison, as a fair average, though it is in my opinion much too large, and is much greater than the actual average revenue from auction sales for many years before and after. If these sums are taken into account, the saving of £500,000 becomes a deficit of £82,000, to which may fairly be added half of £216,000, the deficit of the previous year (during half of which they were in office), making a total deficit during the reign of the

Conservative Government, on the basis of ordinary receipts alone, of £190,000. And this during a period the greater part of which was one of exceptional prosperity. In the succeeding four years, during all of which, except the first four months the present Government were in office, the excess of expenditure over revenue amounted to £720,000, which, however, includes £315,000 specially appropriated immediately on their entering office out of the so-called savings of their predecessors, and £50,000 spent for preventing the incursion of rabbits. During the later period, moreover, the amount paid to Local Authorities from the Revenue, by way of Endowment, over which the Government had no control, exceeded that paid during the former by nearly £460,000, and the increased burden of interest on the Public Debt in the later period as compared with the former was no less than £880,000. Comparing these figures, and bearing in mind the different conditions of the Colony in point of material prosperity during the two periods, I think that the Government need not fear a comparison with their predecessors so far as regards their administration of the public finances. No better proof, indeed, of their care and economy could be afforded than the fact that after so long a period of depression the Treasury is in its present satisfactory condition.

I claim, then, that the Government have done nothing to forfeit the confidence reposed in them four years ago. I do not ask a renewal of that confidence merely on the ground of what they have done, but I appeal to their actions in the past as showing that they may be trusted to carry out what they now propose for the future.

You are often invited to believe that there are no political parties in this Colony. I maintain, however, that there are and always have been in Queensland, as in most other countries where stagnation does not prevail,

two parties, actuated by widely different aims, and regarding public matters from widely different points of view. The immediate objects of the two parties vary, of course, with the circumstances of the country, but the essential difference is everywhere the same. The one party regards every matter from the point of view, "What good will this do to us and our friends?" The other, the Liberal Party, asks "What good will this do to the people generally?"

In a new and undeveloped country, where the opportunities of making money are great, the special advantage sought by the one party is generally a pecuniary one. And what can be more lamentable than to see the policy of a country subordinated to the money-making proclivities of a class? This is not an imaginary case. What I have just said is the key to the position in which we found ourselves five years ago, when we were threatened with the two great dangers to which I have already referred, and when my contention that we were bound to look beyond our own immediate pecuniary gain was—and, I believe, with perfect sincerity—held up to scorn and derision by the leaders of the party then in power. The great problem of this age is not how to accumulate wealth, but how to secure its more equitable distribution. How serious that problem has become, and how imperiously it demands solution, in the congested centres of population of the older countries, is known to all of us who have attentively regarded the signs of the times. I maintain that it is our duty to use every effort to prevent the creation in this new land of such terrible inequalities of condition as are found in Europe, and even in the United States of America.

I beg of you to apply this test of parties in considering the various questions now before the country.

And first of all comes the coloured labour question, on

which indeed depends our very existence as a free people. Every year that passes deepens my conviction that a free self-governing population, and a servile population not admitted to a share in the Government, cannot permanently exist together in the same country. You will no doubt be told that this question is settled. I wish I could believe that it is settled. But I cannot forget that it is only a few months since the champions of coloured labour, in prospect of a coming general election, discontinued for the time their unmeasured abuse of the Government for their action in this respect. I am unable to believe in the genuineness of their conversion, and think it more likely that, if the opportunity offered, they would act upon the principle which they have always consistently followed, and let the future take care of itself, if only in the present they can make money for themselves and their absentee allies. Is this apprehension not supported by the fact that only a few days ago we were informed that a recent distinguished visitor [Lord Brassey] has been proclaiming in England, as a settled and admitted fact, that the North of Australia must in the future belong to the coloured races? I believe, on the contrary, that all Australia will be needed by the white races. And I am convinced that the agricultural lands in the tropical parts of the Colony can be successfully and profitably cultivated by European settlers, working with their own hands, but as their own masters. I sincerely hope that the experiments lately initiated at Mackay with this object will have a fair trial, and that the prophets of failure may not be able to assist in bringing about a fulfilment of their prophecies.

The most immediate pressing aspect of the labour question, however, is the Immigration of Chinese. We have already successfully established our right to deal with this subject by legislation, and the laws of Queens-

land, which were penned by my hand, are the most stringent of any in the Australasian Colonies. A special danger at present lies in the fact that no restriction is imposed by law upon this Immigration in the Northern Territory of South Australia, from which the Chinese, once admitted, may pour at will over the rest of the Continent, but I am glad to know that the Government of that Colony are alive to the danger, and propose to take prompt measures to meet it. It is important, in dealing with this matter, which is likely to become one of international concern, not to lose sight of the gravest, though not always the most immediately apparent, objection to Chinese immigration—that there is not room in the same country for the European and Asiatic civilisations to exist side by side. The subject requires the most careful consideration of our wisest men, and it is important, also, to secure the sympathy and aid of the Mother Country, in order that the means adopted may attain the end which it is essential to secure—the practical exclusion of the Chinese from Australasia. It is extremely desirable that uniform action should be taken by all the Colonies, but this may require some time to bring about. In the meantime, I propose (1) an increase of the poll-tax in each Colony to such an amount as will be practically prohibitive; (2) a diminution of the number of Chinese that may be carried in any ship in Australian waters; (3) the prohibition of their working in all kinds of mines; (4) the imposition of an annual residence tax on all resident Asiatics; (5) the prohibition of the naturalisation of Chinese; and, if necessary, (6) the imposition of an Excise Duty (to be denoted by an impressed stamp or brand) on all goods in the making of which Asiatics are employed. If all the Colonies should adopt such or similar measures, there would, I

think, be little danger to be apprehended ; but if any one Colony should stand out, it might become necessary to take steps which would compel it to choose between commercial intercourse with China and with the rest of Australia.

I have adverted to one of the principal objects immediately before us, the settlement of the lands of the Colony by a European population, and to the action that has already been taken for this purpose. But it is idle to cover the land with crops if there is no market for them when they are grown ; and scarcely any of the crops that can be grown in Queensland, except sugar and tropical fruits, can at present be profitably exported. It is therefore, in my judgment, an essential part of any comprehensive policy for the settlement of Queensland to induce the creation of an industrial population within the Colony, who will, while consuming the products of the agricultural settlers, themselves be producers of the commodities required by the latter. I have always been unable to follow those who imagine that the so-called rules of political economy constitute an exact science, true at all times, and applicable in all places. I maintain, on the contrary, that the varying circumstances of each country must determine what course of action should be followed, and that that fiscal policy alone is wise which is suitable to the circumstances of the nation.

I am of opinion that the time has come for a revision of the Customs Tariff, imposing increased burdens on the importation of goods, whether natural products or manufactured goods, that can be produced in the Colony. I believe the effect would be to give an impetus to our agricultural as well as to our manufacturing industries, which would not only assist each separately, but by their mutual reaction on one another would bring about a prosperity that in the absence of such aid might be

long deferred. I hope to have the opportunity of submitting to the new Parliament a Tariff embodying such a National Fiscal Policy for Queensland. Further assistance could also be given to the agricultural settlers in many parts of the Colony by a revision of the Railway Rates on natural products. The extents however, to which they should be reduced depends to a great extent on the duties levied through the Custom House on the same articles. A judicious reduction of the Railway Rates, with a simultaneous revision of the Tariff, would, I am convinced, result almost immediately in a large increase of production and a great accession of prosperity, not only to the producers but to the whole Colony.

It must not be supposed, however, that such a change in the Customs Tariff would materially increase the Revenue. If it did, it would be at the cost of the imposition of additional burdens on the consumers, whose burdens are, in my opinion, already sufficient. At the same time, I doubt whether the present sources of revenue are adequate to meet the existing charges upon it, and to provide for the necessary and natural expansion of expenditure. A great part of our present burden is due to the construction, at the public expense, of public works which have immensely increased the value of landed property, and it is, I think, unfair that the producers should be called upon through Railway Tariffs to bear so large a share of this burden as at present. And there are, I think, many other objects, such as Aids to prospecting for Minerals, Schools of Mines, Schools of Agriculture, Art Galleries, Public Libraries, and other means of instruction, upon which the public funds might wisely be expended to great advantage.

I hold that the present condition of Queensland is

such that the possessors of realised wealth, whether in the form of land or invested money, ought to make a larger contribution to the public income ; and whenever additional revenue is found necessary it is from these sources that I should seek it. Such a proposal will naturally be obnoxious to the classes I have already referred to, who would prefer the simple and thriftless alternative of selling land—by mock auction as heretofore, or otherwise—in such quantities as might satisfy the necessities of the hour, not caring for, but rather approving of, the difficulties that would be put in the way of future settlement, and the creation of new and dangerous class interests—of the existence of which we have already, indeed, had some warnings. The example of older countries, and notably Ireland, and Scotland, should be sufficient to deter us from any such fatal error.

I am sure that you fully sympathise in the desire of the Government to do the fullest justice to the Northern part of the Colony. The proposals submitted to Parliament last Session with this object met with but scant support from some of the Northern Members, but I have reason to think that our fellow-colonists in the North are not grateful to their representatives for their action. These proposals were submitted as a basis only of future action, for which they were the necessary foundation. The Government intend to renew them with such modifications as may be desirable, and will be prepared to supplement them by a scheme providing for the administration of such of the public affairs of the Central and Northern Districts as are of a local as distinguished from a general character by District Officers responsible to District Representative Assemblies, which it will also be proposed to entrust with a large legislative powers on matters of a local nature.

The relations between Labour and Capital constitute one

of the great difficulties of the day. I look to the recognition of the principle that *a share of the profits of productive labour belongs of right to the labourer* as of the greatest importance in the future adjustment of those relations. The experiment of giving to workmen a personal interest in the success of the industrial undertaking in which they are engaged has already been tried in a few cases by the individual action of employers, and has resulted in conspicuous advantage to all parties. I entertain a strong hope that before long this principle will form part of the positive law of Queensland.

The Government were prevented by circumstances from approaching any branch of this subject during the last session, but they hope to be able to deal with several of the more pressing aspects of the question at an early date. I refer more particularly to the Right of Workmen to a Lien for their Wages on their Work, their Protection from Accidents, and the Regulation of Factories.

I trust that the new Parliament will ratify the agreement for the Defence of Floating Trade in Australasian waters, the nature of which has been so strangely misunderstood and misrepresented.

The expenditure upon Public Works can hardly be much longer continued at the same rate as during the last two or three years. We have now completed the extension of the Southern and Western Railway to Charleville, and of the Northern Railway to Hughenden. The Central line has still to be carried to the Thomson River. But at these points I think these three lines may rest for the present, while we devote our energies in this respect to the construction of Railways for the development of the Mining and Agricultural Districts, and to the steady extension of the Main Coast Railway. The money has already been appropriated for some of these lines, and the necessity for others has lately become apparent. I

believe that it is better for us to undertake these works ourselves by means of borrowed money, and I am satisfied that while our affairs are conducted with ordinary prudence we need not fear to have recourse to the English market for all necessary funds. The Government will continue, therefore, to advocate a vigorous prosecution of public works in the form of Railways and Harbour Improvements by means of Loan. I hope that the time is not distant when, by an extension of the principle of Local Government, the latter works may be placed under the control of Local Authorities.

Amongst the many other important matters with which the Government propose immediately to deal are the question of Water and Water Supply—from which the recent abundant rains must not be allowed to divert our attention—the improvement of the laws relating to Mining for Gold and other Minerals, and the threatened rabbit invasion.

The administration of the Government demands unceasing attention and the application of the most rigid economy, in order that our expenditure may be kept within our income. I believe that recent administration has not failed in this respect. At the same time, the members of the Civil Service are entitled to fair consideration, and ought not to be compelled to go on from year to year without improvement of their condition. I desire to see the laws relating to their appointment and remuneration placed on a more satisfactory footing, and I have no doubt that the Commission which is now inquiring into the subject will afford great assistance to the Government in dealing with this matter.

I think that the time has come for the establishment of a University in Queensland, without which our admirable Educational System will always be incomplete. This does not mean, as is often supposed, the expendi-

ture of large sums of money in costly buildings. A University consists not of buildings but of men. You are aware that the Government have already taken steps to provide instruction in Mineralogy and Agricultural Science, and some aid is given in Brisbane to Technical Instruction. But in order that these subjects may be taught systematically and to the best advantage, the whole matter should be under the control of a competent governing body, which can only be supplied by a University. And I am quite sure that at a comparatively trifling cost we could establish and maintain such an institution, which would not only raise the standard of intellectual culture throughout the Colony, but be of the utmost practical advantage to all persons engaged in industrial pursuits.

In conclusion, gentlemen, let me say that I have no sympathy whatever with those who regard Australia or Queensland as a field for exploitation, from which to derive an income to be expended elsewhere. I am an Australian, and every object truly Australian, everything that shall keep Australia for Australians and their kinsmen of the Old World who will come to us, shall always command my most active help. But I decline to join in the senseless cry that the interests of Australia and Great Britain are in conflict, or that those who cherish the existing ties are disloyal to Australia. The best men in both parts of the Empire are sincerely trying to prevent any such conflict from arising, and I hope that no disloyal faction will succeed in creating it.

If, gentlemen, you think I deserve a renewal of your confidence, I beg that you will show it by sending me back to Parliament with a colleague who will help me to give effect to the principles I advocate.

I will take an early opportunity of meeting you.—
Meanwhile I am, gentlemen, your most obedient servant,

S. W. GRIFFITH.

SIR THOMAS M'ILWRAITH'S MANIFESTO.

TO THE ELECTORS OF NORTH BRISBANE.

GENTLEMEN,—Some two years ago the pressure of my own private business, and that devolving on me from the death of friends whose interests were entrusted to my charge, forced me out of political life. That pressure of work no longer exists ; and when appealed to by my friends to once more come forward into the political arena, my intense interest in Australian public matters made me at once consent to endeavour to assume again an active participation in the affairs of my own Colony. In determining to seek your suffrages, I was guided by two considerations—first, the strongly-expressed desire of many of you that I should represent the city with which I have been so long identified ; and, secondly, the feeling that in addressing North Brisbane I was laying my views before the most cosmopolitan constituency in the Colony.

With the courtesy that a leader of the Opposition should show towards those in power, I have waited for the manifesto of the Premier. That has come at last, and not too soon ; but too soon in one respect, for before that manifesto appeared the date of the dissolution of Parliament and the general election ought, in all justice to the constituencies of the colony, to have been distinctly fixed and announced.

Before entering into an exposition of the policy which I consider ought to guide the future of Queensland, I must necessarily refer to the action of the two political parties that have ruled the country for the last ten years. When I assumed the reins of power in 1879, the ruinous policy followed by the previous Government (who had run their full term of office) had culminated in a period of depression unexampled in this colony, except by the

disastrous year of 1866. The Railway Reserves Act had succeeded in locking up some of the very best lands of the Colony in the hands of a few individuals, and in directing a large portion of the working capital of the Colony to the purchase of land, thereby cramping all the producing industries. A deficit existed in the Treasury of over £50,000, and the preceding Administration had given the Colony such a downward impulse that the causes of that deficit did not cease to operate for over eighteen months, making the deficiency in 1881 greater still, swallowing the Railway Reserve surplus of £382,000. No employment could be found for labour; men were in forced idleness by thousands, and my first experience as a Premier was in organising relief work wherever it could be done. During all this depressing time the Griffith Opposition policy was to force the Government to increase the taxation of the people. This we persistently refused to do. The effect of our Administration began to tell in a year or two; the deficit disappeared, and when we left office in 1883 we left behind us in the Treasury over £700,000.

The Griffith Government took office, and a similar policy to that which had wrecked the Treasury in their previous term was at once initiated. The Land Act of 1884 was passed. It was to settle people upon the land; no further land legislation was to be required for thirty years, and the Treasury was to be so effectually replenished by the rents flowing in, that taxation was to be remitted where it pressed most heavily on the people. None of these effects have followed. Never in the history of the Colony has there been less settlement on the land. Already two amending Land Acts have been passed, and the effects on the Treasury were such as to drive from their Government the only competent minister [Mr. Dickson, the leader of the auctioneers and free trade im-

porters, driven from political life for some years at these very elections] they possessed beside the Premier. During the former gentleman's tenure of office, he in vain tried to stem off the evil day by additional taxation.

In 1885 an Act was passed imposing a duty of 3d. per gallon on colonial manufactured beer, and a £5 annual registration fee on breweries. A 5 per cent. *ad valorem* duty was imposed on machinery—not for encouraging native industry (for Mr. Dickson was Treasurer), but for purely revenue purposes—and the 5 per cent. *ad valorem* duty was afterwards increased to 7½. The duty on rum was increased from 10s. to 12s. per gallon, and a similar duty imposed upon other beverages which had previously paid the *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent. A royalty was placed on all timber cut in the Colony, but has barely paid the cost of collection, nearly ruined the timber-cutting industry, and, in my opinion, should be immediately abolished; and to pacify the clamour raised by the timber-getters, an import duty was imposed on all timbers brought from abroad. Yet, with all this additional taxation, the Premier, when he accepted a brief from the Treasury, and delivered his Financial Statement in August, had to acknowledge to a deficit of half a million, which he made no effort to pay, but wiped out by bills to be paid by a future Administration, and urged a land tax as a natural result of the development of the Colony. No one can study that Financial Statement without seeing in it throughout that the pleader can discover nothing in the future as inevitable but additional taxation. No doubt additional taxation has been the constant effect of the Government of the so-called Liberal party. It certainly should not be the effect of good government. The Griffith Government have been extravagant beyond measure in the expenditure of Government money, and ignorantly extravagant, for not a Minister among them has the grip

of a business man on his office. When I became Minister for Works, I visited my constituency for re-election, and paid my own coach fare. When the last Minister for Works and Mines was appointed, he travelled north in search of a constituency in a Government steamer at the expense of the country of over £20 a day. The expenditure in 1882-3, when I left office, was £2,317,674; in 1886-7 it was £3,263,584, an increase of over 40 per cent in four years. Were I to take out from these sums the Special Supplementary Estimates, which should be done to make the comparison complete, then the expenditure for 1882-3 would stand at £2,072,634, and for 1886-7 at £3,175,787, or an increase for the four years of 53 per cent. It has been the habit of the Government to attribute all their financial disasters to the drought. This is no defence. The effects of the drought are being felt now in the diminished expenditure of those who lost heavily; but during the drought, and while they were losing, the Treasury was gaining. For one man the pastoralist employs now he employed two then, and his losses and wants created a market for the farmer such as he has rarely enjoyed before. No; the cause of the financial disaster of the Government was by their Land Act ignorantly destroying one of our best sources of revenue, and their extravagance in every department of administration. This is not the first time that the same party have landed the Colony in the same position, and through the same causes. They have done it twice before in our short history.

I strongly commend to your consideration a table published this week showing the operations of the Land Act of 1884.

Viewed in the light of the prognostications made by its authors in 1884, the results would seem ludicrous were the derangement of public affairs caused by its

operation not of such serious import. We cannot afford to have the best interests of the Colony frittered away, putting in practice the crude theories of men who have proved themselves so utterly incompetent to judge the effect that practice would have on either the people or the departments of the State. But the most serious violation of Constitutional Government was made by the Ministry in passing the Act for the ten million loan. There is no principle of Constitutional Government so clear as the one which preserves to the people through their representatives the right of the expenditure of their own money. The life of a Ministry is five years, which may be shortened to anything by circumstances. Had the Ministers followed out their principles the life of the present one would have been limited to three years. In their wildest dreams the Government never contemplated spending more than two millions a year from loan. They asked for and received from Parliament a Loan Act for ten millions in addition to the unexpended loan balance of nearly three millions in hand. It was well known at the time, and has been amply demonstrated since, that it would take sixteen millions instead of ten millions to complete the works in the schedule to the Act. It was therefore absolutely impossible for the Ministry during its maximum life to complete much more than half the works contemplated, and this made the Minister for Works, or rather the Ministry, completely masters of Parliament. The Assembly had passed on to the Ministry the power which the people had entrusted to them, and what works should be done and what works should be left undone was entirely in the hands of Ministers. Within that sixteen millions, assented to by Parliament (not ten millions as they ignorantly thought), the power of the Ministry was supreme, and was used to hold together a majority. The people's representa-

tives surrendered their power to the Government—the representatives became slaves, and the sufferers were the people themselves.

A tax on the unimproved value of freehold land was proposed by Sir S. W. Griffith in August. It was said by him to be a fair and equitable tax—that the landed classes contributed practically nothing to the revenue in comparison with the poor man. The tax was carried by a majority of twenty-four to five, in a House consisting of fifty-seven members. Considering that both majority and minority mustered only one-half of the House, this was in effect a defeat of the Government on a vital principle, yet against all constitutional practices they did not resign, and they did not appeal to the country. When, at last, an appeal to the country has been forced, the Premier comes before his constituents in his manifesto last Wednesday, but the land tax has vanished. He is even in doubt whether additional taxes will be wanted. That depends entirely on whether he and his party are retained in power. If they are, you will require to consider not only a land tax, but many other taxes.

I oppose a land tax in Queensland except for the purpose of works undertaken by local bodies. A land tax for general revenue diminishes the capital value of the land. The moment a land tax is passed, each owner may write off a certain portion of his capital as gone. In Queensland 7 per cent. of the land belongs to private individuals and 93 per cent. is Crown property. The only money coming into the Treasury from the tax therefore is from the 7 per cent. ; for the tax from the Government to the Government on the 93 per cent. is simply a cross-entry. A tax which is effective in producing only 7 per cent. of its full force is as unproductive a tax as could be invented. The value of a tax depends on its effectiveness, and here you have a tax on land

which can only be effective on 7 per cent. People who have not thought out the subject say the tax is fully effective against private owners, and Government lands are not affected; they pay nothing. This is a vital mistake. The 93 per cent. of Crown lands pay the tax to the same extent as the private owners, and just as effectually as if the tax was paid annually into the Treasury, but it is paid in a different way. The capital value of the Crown lands sold after the imposition of the tax is diminished by the capitalised amount of the tax.

First alienate the land, and then consider the subject of a land tax. The principle of a land tax in a colony like Queensland, when she herself is the big proprietress, is so thoroughly opposed to all economic principles that it can be agitated for only by people who desire to put class against class.

In the Premier's Financial Statement the land tax was by no means the only tax to be proposed. Other taxes were threatened, and what amounted to additional taxation of a most oppressive character was caused in the withdrawal of the two to one subsidy to the Divisional Boards. This subsidy is what is termed by the *Telegraph* newspaper, the organ of the Premier, the "damnation legacy" left him by my Government. I have often been indignant at the estimate formed of the gullibility of the voters of the Colony by both Premier and *Telegraph* in daring to put the two to one subsidy as a legacy from me. It was created by himself. Parliament, on my recommendation, passed the Divisional Boards Act in 1879, providing for a two to one subsidy for five years. At the general election in 1883 Sir S. W. Griffith, as a plank in his programme, adopted the principle of extending the time for another five years. As soon as he obtained office he did extend the time. The so-called

legacy was not a burden put round his neck by me, but a load voluntarily assumed by himself. Considering the way in which the high subsidy was voluntarily offered by the Government to the Boards and the obligations undertaken by the latter on the strength of the concession, I look upon the decrease of the subsidy determined on by the Government as nothing less than a breach of faith. We are bound in honour to fulfil our obligations, and grant the two to one subsidy till the end of the prescribed five years.

Since ever I have actively interfered in politics I have been a devoted advocate of local self-government, and to achieve a triumph for that principle I have always been contented to take a second place. When the Douglas Government brought in the Local Government Act of 1878 the measure was too unpopular to find in Sir S. W. Griffith anything but a lukewarm champion. I was then leader of the Opposition, and took a far warmer interest in the bill than he did himself. That carried the bill through, and in the succeeding year, when I was leader of the Government, we adapted the same principle to every part of the Colony. The reception our bill met from the Griffith Opposition is a matter of history. The Divisional Boards Act came into life after stonewalling on the part of its opponents, which might have been effectual but for the stern belief in the principles of local government held by our party. Many attempts have been made by the present Government to upset these principles, and often, I regret, with success, but I will constantly resist the expenditure of moneys from the general revenue on works in any part of the Colony outside of the principles of the Local Government Acts.

It has been constantly dinned into your ears of late that the M'Ilwraith Administration owed their financial success to abnormal sales by auction of Crown lands,

thereby creating large estates and *despoiling the patrimony of the people*. Personally I have always deprecated auction sales of land to any great extent, preferring the system of selection as more likely to get family settlement—but if only for financial purposes a certain amount must accrue to the Treasury from that source. I ask your calm decision on a fair statement of the case ; have the party I represent owed more to the auction sales to fill the Treasury than the so-called Liberals? They vociferate that we have ; Sir S. W. Griffith, in his manifesto, says that we have. I will prove my case by figures compiled under his Administration, and contained in the Registrar-General's statistics of the Colony. Table CLX., page 255, of the statistics of the Colony shows the lands proclaimed for sale by auction, those sold by auction and subsequent selection, and those withdrawn from sale for the last nineteen years. From 1874 to 1878, when the Griffith Liberals were in power, there were sold 376,830 acres. From 1879 to 1883, when I was in power, there were sold 494,776 acres. Taking the difference of population into account in the two periods there is not much difference between the two parties, but the other part of the table is much more significant. From 1874 to 1878 the Griffith Liberals put up to auction and tried to sell 1,008,584 acres, of which they succeeded in selling only 376,830 acres. From 1879 to 1883 my Ministry put up to auction and tried to sell 820,216, of which we succeeded in selling only 494,776. If each had succeeded in selling as much as they tried to do the Griffith Liberals would have been the bigger sinners by far ; but to any one who looks manfully at the facts it must be clear that both parties evidently sold as much as they could. It is deplorable to see the desperate efforts made lately to extract money from auction lands by Mr. Dutton [Minister for Lands, and as such author of the Land Act

of 1884]. How remorselessly the unearned increment has been sacrificed ! The last time I was down the river I looked in vain for the slightest sign of humanity in a town called Myrtle, on this side of Luggage Point. Not a house, nor a hut, nor a tent was visible from the river, and yet the "Government Gazette," vouched for the fact that nearly every allotment in the town had been sold by auction.

The Premier, in his manifesto, has told you that "the action of the Government with respect to the Pacific Island labour trade, which provoked most bitter opposition and vilification from those persons who profited by the former abuses, has effectually retrieved the character of Queensland in the eyes of the world."

This implied charge against the previous Government has been repeated in much stronger language by the Press organs of the Griffith party. It is entirely unfounded. I charge Sir S. W. Griffith with being the author of the abuses in the kanaka trade which he claims to have put down, and with bringing that foul fame on Queensland by permitting slavery within her territory which he claims he made fair and stainless.

When I left office in 1883 there were in this Colony over twelve thousand kanakas introduced under the regulations then in force. If my successor, Sir S. W. Griffith, thought there was one human being in that number who was working in the Colony against his will, who had been deported from his home in the Pacific under false representations or by force, it was his plain duty to ascertain the facts and return that man to his home and liberty. He took no such steps, but continued to license ships for the South Seas as before, and he went further. He licensed the *Ceara*, the *Lizzie*, the *Hopeful*, the *Sybil*, the *Forest King*, and the *Heath*, and permitted these ships to recruit blacks on the coast of New Guinea,

a thing which had never to my knowledge been done by any Colonial Secretary before. The result was inevitable. The blacks on that coast were savages and cannibals, and the contact between them and the white crews of Griffith's licensed ships brought out all the horrors of slavery and murder. Such terrible acts could not possibly be hidden. A Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the whole matter, and this reported that men on board every one of these vessels had been stolen from their islands, and were in actual slavery. As I have said, there were twelve thousand kanakas in the Colony at the time, introduced under my authority. The Commissioners did not examine the case of one ; indeed, by the terms of the commission, they were not allowed. Now, long before those men's time had expired, Sir S. W. Griffith had commenced the gross charges against my Government of man-stealing. In what position does he stand who had the knowledge and the power for years, and declined to redress the wrong? He cannot escape from the horns of the dilemma. He is either making a charge that is wholly untrue against my Government, or he has been inhuman enough to have allowed human beings to remain in slavery when he had the power in his hands to procure their freedom. What a name he has struggled for, and got, for putting down the abuses in the South Sea Trade, and yet the only atrocities that have come to light were committed under his own regulations and Administration.

In spite of poll-taxes and Passenger Regulation Acts the aggregate number of Chinese in the Australian Colonies has steadily increased for several years past. The only remedy, therefore, for this growing evil, to my mind, is total exclusion. The Americans have overcome the difficulty. They have made a friendly treaty with the Chinese Empire, in which the Chinese agree to

their exclusion from America, and assist this being carried out by prohibiting the shipping of Chinese labourers from China to America. If America can make such a treaty with China, why should not we? and as we are not permitted by our connection with Great Britain to approach the Chinese Government directly we should call on the Mother Country to act for us, and we have a right to claim that she should act as effectually for our interests as the Americans have done for theirs. If you do me the honour of electing me as your representative, and should I return to power, I will at once take action, both separately and jointly with the other Colonies, to secure the immediate exclusion of Chinese from Australia.

The coolie question materially assisted to bring the present Government into power. Their legislation on this question has left things exactly as they were in 1883, but the Government have boasted for three years that they had settled the coolie question for ever. It seems, however, they have not, for the Premier, in his address to you, says he wishes he could believe it was settled. In the name of common sense why in his four years' term of office has he not settled it? and why is the question reserved for a general election? Then he presents to the electors the alternative, "Take me or you'll get coolies."

As a matter of fact I never put any bill, resolution, or proposition of any kind whatever before the House when on the Government benches or in Opposition for the introduction of coolies into this country. The action I took was to conduct a correspondence with the Indian Government regarding regulations, but all negotiations broke down because I insisted on the forcible deportation of the coolies to their country at the end of their engagements. There was never a time when I was in power when anything like a majority in the House was in favour

of coolie labour. A still larger majority in the country are against it now, and I am one of that majority. The constant presence of Sir S. W. Griffith on the Government benches to avert that danger is not, therefore, necessary. It is unfortunate for this country that after four years' deliberation on a question which consumes him with anxiety he can suggest no remedy but constituting himself the eternal policeman with the power and pay of Premier. Griffith or coolies is the cruel alternative he places before the country. If he has the interests of the white man really at heart let him withdraw from that position.

I thoroughly believe in the confederation of the Australian Colonies. My labours in that direction are not unknown to you. In completing the work (which I had commenced) by the Federal Council Act, Sir S. W. Griffith had my cordial support. The first session of that Council was not fruitful, but it left strong hopes that New South Wales and South Australia would both join in, and a National Australian life commence. A heavy blow was dealt to these hopes by the acceptance of an invitation from the Imperial Government to a conference in London to consider questions which formed the very foundation on which our united Australia was to rest. The result was inevitable. The second session of the Federal Council met, and they had nothing to do. Their *raison d'être* had almost gone, for this Imperial Conference had taken out of their hands the question of federal defence. My best labours in public life will be devoted to the great question of confederation. I believe in a united Australia, and hope in spite of the allurements to draw them from the path of duty to see our Australian statesmen acting in unison as the founders of a great country.

I think the Opposition did quite right in opposing the

Naval Defence Bill on the grounds that a defeated and discredited minority had no constitutional right to bring such a measure before the House. I go further than this, and oppose the bill, as through it Great Britain is evidently evading a responsibility which attaches to her, is throwing an undue burden on her colonial possessions, and by the method of her proposed defence cramping our national life.

In 1882 a conference, at which all the Colonies were represented, met in Sydney, and resolved that the land defences of our country should be undertaken by ourselves, and the naval defence by Great Britain. Until the meeting of the Colonial Conference last year Great Britain had nothing to object to this proposal, which is far from being unfair to her. In undertaking the land defences of Australia we were undertaking to defend not only our lives and property but the property to the extent of three hundred and fifty millions owned by people who do not reside here, who live in Great Britain, and who from our peculiar system of taxation are not made in any way to contribute to the cost of that defence. Now what has happened since 1882 that that position is changed, and that Great Britain should ask us to pay a subsidy for defending the shipping on our coast? Leaving out the smaller class of ships, which, in the event of a hostile fleet being on our coast, can secure their safety by scuttling up creeks and rivers where the enemy cannot follow, 90 per cent. of the shipping trading in our seas belong to British owners. The vessels of the Union Steamship Company, the A.U.S.N. Company, the P. and O. Company, the British-India Company, and the Orient Company constitute nearly three-fourths of our shipping (not to mention many other smaller companies and single ships), and are purely British companies with the owners residing in Great Britain. Why should we be at the cost of their

protection? If the same British shipping was on the coast of any country in the world not connected at all with Great Britain, except in trade, she would have a fleet in the neighbourhood for its protection of much larger proportions than the combined British and proposed subsidised fleet.

Sir S. W. Griffith attended the London Conference accredited by himself, having stealthily concealed his intention from Parliament. What right had he to commit the Colony in so grave a matter, and above all, what right had he to agree that this Colony should pay a subsidy to help to support a British fleet on our coast, when only a few months before, as the representative of Queensland at the Federal Council in Hobart, he had expressed himself as opposed to any subsidy being given to Great Britain for their fleet to defend our coast? In that Council he says :—"I do not think that it is in accordance with the spirit of the times in these Colonies that we should contribute to the revenue of Great Britain by a distinct money payment."

I have addressed you more at length on this subject than I otherwise would have done did I not know I was opposing the determination of the other colonies, but to insure federal action I think we should prepare ourselves for great sacrifices to secure it, but on that ground only. As a sacrifice to the federal spirit I might agree to pay our due portion of the subsidy, but, if I did so, I would alter the preamble of the bill to show the grounds on which we acted.

The Separation of North from South Queensland is to many a vital question. I have not been opposed to Separation, but I think no separation should take place until the Colonies are federated. We exercise an influence on that question as a United Queensland which I am afraid we should lose were we divided, and it will be true

policy to subordinate the lesser question to the greater. I thoroughly believe, however, after long consideration and intimate knowledge of the Northern people, that a measure which would give them, through their representatives, the complete control of the expenditure of their own revenue, would satisfy their present requirements, and honestly administered would probably obviate the demand for separation. The more the principles of local government are extended, the nearer we approach the time when all Australia will act together under common laws and a common nationality.

I saw, without surprise, in the manifesto of the Premier, that in his judgment it is "an essential part of any comprehensive policy for the settlement of Queensland to induce the creation of an industrial population within the Colony, who will, while consuming the products of the agricultural settlers, themselves be producers of the commodities required by the latter." I have often expressed such sentiments myself, but in rather warmer language. I don't remember until August last, when the Treasury was so depleted and the Premier out of his wits for want of money, that he ever uttered such sentiments in the House, but I remember well that he spoke against any one who advocated Protectionist principles as "exponents of an exploded system of political economy." I am not afraid of terms—I have been a Protectionist ever since I was a member of the House. I am glad to see that our forces are increasing throughout the Colony, and I have very little doubt that the time is not far distant when we shall be able to change the face of Queensland, and see around us cultivated fields and manufacturing towns.

The revision of the tariff is a work that must be undertaken with great care and prudence. The interests of our great colony are not all identical, but I have no doubt that with a steadfast view to the encouragement of settle-

ment on our lands, and of manufactories in our towns, those interests will be brought together, and will ultimately lead to a far bigger immigration from congested populations in Europe at their own expense, than we are having now at the expense of the country.

A Civil Service Bill has been promised by almost every Government since I have been a member of the House. The want of an Act defining the rights, responsibilities, and duties of the civil servants has no doubt been felt more and more every year. I think that this subject should at an early date occupy the attention of the new Parliament, both in the interests of the civil servants themselves and in justice to the country.

Our railways are becoming more unprofitable every year, and those using them more dissatisfied with their effects on trade. I think far greater efforts should have been made by properly-adjusted railway tariffs to secure to Queensland her own trade and to give all the encouragement our railways can give to our rising native industries. Our railways are not half employed now. Lower tariffs and increased work is the principle I look to as the most likely means to take from our shoulders that incubus which has lately so highly increased, the difference between the profits we make and the interest we pay.

The wonderful success of the mining industry has again forced the attention of the whole Colony to the fact that it is now, and must ever in the future be, the great means by which industrial settlement is to be attracted to our shores. The laws and regulations with regard to mining on Crown lands are old ; and experience has thrown much light on their working. A new code of regulations has lately been devised by the Minister for Mines, which seems to regard an increase of power to the warden as a panacea of all ills. I do not agree with this, and will be

prepared to give every encouragement to working miners to occupy Crown land for mining purposes, and every security to capital for the development of our mineral resources.

The nuisance of rabbits is the most serious calamity that has happened to the Colonies for years, and requires the most determined and immediate steps to crush it. If returned to power I will give this subject my gravest attention.

We have spent millions in railways, and can now afford to devote some of our resources to irrigation. From this I anticipate the most magnificent results.

Having touched on general affairs, I may refer to those connected with the city itself. I joined the Water Board thinking I should be able to force the Government to some scheme of water supply adapted to the wants of this growing community. I resigned when no action of ours or recommendation could command the attention or even an answer from the Government. There is no doubt whatever that that question must be immediately dealt with, and the sanitary condition of the town is in the same position. In a few years Brisbane will be far outside of its present sanitary arrangements—in most respects it is so now—and they will demand more attention from your members in the Legislature than has been given to them before.

My long connection with public affairs, and my opinions on most subjects being so well and widely known, release me from the obligation of touching on many matters, which I have therefore left alone. I will, however, do myself the honour of addressing you in a few days, when you will have the opportunity of drawing my attention to any matter of importance which I may have omitted.—I have the honour to be, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

THOMAS M'ILWRAITH.

AUCHENFLOWER, *March 13, 1888.*

APPENDIX B.

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL PARTY.

AFTER the general election and before the Central Committee of the National party had been dissolved, it was felt that a movement should be initiated for a permanent organisation, the aims of which should be in the main those that had animated the gentlemen associated in securing the return of Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith and his friends to Parliament. Sub-committees were appointed to carefully consider the matter, and the result of prolonged deliberation and exhaustive discussion was the formation of an association which is meant to embrace members in every part of the Colony. The motto of the association is "Alliance, not Dependence," and the objects as finally adjusted are as follows :—

1. The cultivation of an Australian national spirit with respect to all matters affecting education, labour, trade, and laws.

2. The federation of the Australian Colonies into a United Dominion, with provision for a system of Australian national defence.

3. The energetic vindication and protection of the civil and political liberties, rights, and obligations of the people, and the adoption of the principle that laws passed by the Australian Legislatures shall not require Imperial sanction to render them operative.

4. The fostering and protection of Australian industries.

5. The exclusion from Australia of Chinese and other servile races, and the preservation of the entire continent as a home for white men.

6. The exclusion from the islands and waters of Australasia and the Western Pacific of all foreign convicts.

7. The active promotion of all Legislative measures calculated—

(a) To check the wasteful expenditure of public money, prevent the levying of oppressive taxation, and guard against the abuse of political patronage.

(b) To repress injurious monopolies, allay sectional jealousies, and prevent the creation of privileged classes.

(c) To stimulate settlement upon the land, and develop its mineral and other resources.

(d) To carry on reproductive public works, to conserve the rainfall, improve the natural water-courses, and tap the subterranean waters of the country.

(e) To remedy all abuses in the law, to repeal all barbarous and obsolete Acts, and to reduce the cost of law proceedings.

8. The return of members to the Legislative Assemblies pledged to carry out the foregoing principles and objects.

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